

RICE UNIVERSITY

FORGING THE RAPIER AMONG SCYTHES:  
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR HORACE SMITH-DORRIEN  
AND THE ALDERSHOT COMMAND 1907-1912

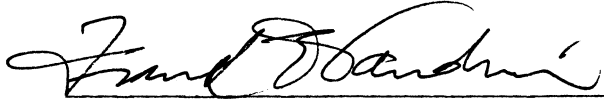
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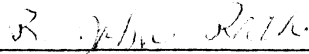
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1907-1912

## ABSTRACT

When the Boer War ended in 1902, Great Britain began to analyze her extremely poor performance in that conflict. For decades, her army had accomplished its assigned missions on numerous colonial campaigns and expeditions. But the Boer War clearly demonstrated that her old military practices and attitudes were terribly outdated. In August 1914, when the First World War engulfed Europe, Britain fielded the best trained, equipped, and led army in the world.

In the twelve years between the end of the Boer War and the start of the Great War, England had completely refurbished her army. Most of the credit for preparing the British Expeditionary Force belongs to Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Aldershot Command, 1907-1912. He improved the living conditions of the soldiers; injected realism into marksmanship, training, and maneuvers; taught the cavalry to fight dismounted with rifles; developed the initiative and self-respect of the individual soldier; and most importantly, streamlined Britain's haphazard mobilization procedures.

Although he played a key role in the early months of combat, his major contribution toward winning the war to end all wars was his far-sighted and sound training programs and reforms during the four years that he was in command at Aldershot.

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## INTRODUCTION

At 6:30 p.m. of the first Monday of August, 1914, a soldier walked out a side door of the headquarters of the British army at Aldershot, crossed the wide lawn, and raised three large, black spheres to the top of the flagpole. These three black balls were the official signal for the mobilization of the British Expeditionary Force.<sup>1</sup> Soldiers at Aldershot had been drilled on mobilization orders during many training exercises. Each seemingly trivial detail in the gathering of men, supplies, and equipment had been tested, improved, retested, improved again, and retested again in an almost never ending cycle until every biscuit, cleaning rod, and nose-bag had its own prescribed niche.

But this mobilization was not a mere training exercise; it was the reason behind the endless practise, for on the next day, August 4, Great Britain declared war on Germany. For the most part, the soldiers acted very much like they had during the previous rehearsals. However, the Officers' Mess did make a concession to custom by posting two notices: "Officers may wear Service dress or blue undress jackets in the Mess," and "Officers are particularly requested to pay their mess bill before leaving."<sup>2</sup>

On Wednesday, August 5, each commander received a Top Secret file containing his unit's movement orders to an unspecified port of embarkation. This movement was not the traditional "hurry up and wait" common to most army operations. Every superfluous minute was trimmed from the



master schedule; most battalions were allowed only ten minutes to entrain all personnel. Sixty hours were allotted for the movement of 350 troop trains to Southampton, but the system was so well prepared that only forty-five hours were needed.<sup>3</sup>

When the British Expeditionary Force landed in France, it was the best equipped, trained, and led army in the world--"a rapier among scythes."<sup>4</sup> Based on Great Britain's past history of military preparedness and competence in mobilization, few military observers would have believed the British army capable of such a flawless demonstration of professionalism and attention to detail.<sup>5</sup>

England's ability to overcome her traditional heritage of incredible military muddle and bumbling incompetence caught many observers by surprise and has prompted questions from historians as to how this was accomplished. Answers to these inquiries are many, but most revolve around the reforms debated after the turn of the twentieth century and achieved during the period from 1907 to 1912 when the regulars at Aldershot were commanded by a very special general--a general who forged and honed that British "rapier." This swordsmith, who anticipated the nature of the First World War, was Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Aldershot Command.

This thesis explores the impact Smith-Dorrien had upon the British army during his four years at Aldershot--England's paramount military installation. Specifically, this paper will relate how he improved the living conditions of the soldiers, injected realism into marksmanship, training, and maneuvers; taught the cavalry to fight dismounted with

rifles; streamlined Britain's haphazard mobilization procedures; and developed the initiative and self-respect of the private soldier. Also this study will attempt to portray the army of the period and describe its transformation from an obsolete organization oriented toward punitive colonial expeditions to a truly modern army able to hold its own against Europe's best.

When Smith-Dorrien assumed command at Aldershot in December 1907, the army was akin to a well-tried iron blade of an obsolete pattern. And while the sword's victories over the past seventy-five years were considerable, its edge was dulled and nicked. Outdated attitudes, tactics, and equipment were like layers of rust that covered cracks and imperfections in the weapon. These flaws had not been noticed in combat against the crude weapons of savages, but they could cause the sword to splinter were it to clash against a modern steel sabre wielded by a professional.

In one sense, the Boer War (1899-1902) was a timely intervention before Great Britain had to encounter a modern army. When England parried Germany's thrust into France in August 1914, it was with a far better weapon than the one she used in South Africa against the tenacious Boers.

Great Britain's dismal and pathetic floundering during the Boer War starkly revealed the shortcomings and deficiencies in the British military system. England dispatched 400,000 men into the South African veldt to defeat some 50,000 farmers.<sup>6</sup> In order to appreciate fully the extraordinary efforts expended in converting the army from what it was in 1900 to the "magnificent fighting machine" that stepped onto the shores

of France fourteen years later, a review of the British army in its "before" phase is necessary.

Until the Boer War, Great Britain had little reason to be dissatisfied with her army. Her soldiers, every one a volunteer, had seen active service in every year between 1837 and 1900. An incomplete tally would include 225 separate campaigns and expeditions to virtually every part of the empire's distant fringes and beyond--from Abyssinia to Zululand, from Burma to New Zealand.<sup>7</sup> Throughout Britain's empire, regimental colors signified the presence of the armed power backing English interests abroad. Remote and numerous graves outlined by whitewashed rocks (the soldier's final "bit o' Britain") gave mute testimony to the willingness of the authorities to exercise that power.

With the prominent exceptions of the disasters at Isandhlwana (1879), Maiwand (1880), and Majuba Hill (1881), the troops and their officers accomplished their assigned missions. If the bureaucracy and the staff "mucked-up" everything, "Tommy Atkins," with his patient plodding and dogged steadfastness, could be relied upon to finish the campaign triumphant. Except for the dust, these colonial actions were nothing like an Aldershot parade ground. Instead, they were a demanding, unforgiving, and exceedingly thorough martial finishing school for all ranks.

While European commanders studied problems of mass organization, mobilization, and maneuver, English officers in mountain, desert, and jungle operations dealt with the challenges of near-impossible terrain, improvised logistics, and extended communications. Innovative field commanders relied more upon a plan that was tailored to the particular demands of each situation than on a "system" to be universally applied.

Staff work was circumscribed by each general's personality, and there was no uniformity of procedure. Staff officers were picked as favors to old comrades and ". . . consisted largely of kinfolk or friends, selected as much for their personal congeniality as for their ability to perform their not very difficult duties."<sup>8</sup> This collective body of colonial experience grew into a "small war" mentality that was well suited to the isolated outposts on India's northwest frontier but incapable of withstanding the stress of a major European confrontation.

Britain's opponent in her little wars was ". . . a pore benighted 'eathen but a first-class fightin' man."<sup>9</sup> These heathen ranged from religious zealots in the Sudan deserts, to crafty bandits in the Afghan mountains, to cannibal kings in the West African jungles. Since England was ever victorious against these primitives, were not her methods, tactics, and attitudes still valid? Since the regimental square and volley fire had won the day in 1898 at the battle of Omdurman as it had in the ten decades before the battle, would it not be just as decisive for the next ten? As long as the British officer was a gallant gentleman and the British soldier an automaton sewed in a scarlet tunic, then would not England always prevail on the battlefield? It took the Boers, a small group of hardy settlers and farmers, in South Africa to provide the answers to these questions: an unequivocal "No!"

Armed with modern Mauser rifles with smokeless cartridges and protected by entrenchments, the Boers' devastatingly accurate firepower shattered regiments, reputations, and rationale alike. "War had been proclaimed between rigid formulas and a healthy, untrammelled common

sense."<sup>10</sup> It was humiliating and bewildering war for beribboned commanders.

Boer soldiers were mounted but fought on foot as individuals; the British soldier was ". . . no more than a mindless brick in a moving wall of flesh."<sup>11</sup> Press correspondents and soldiers' letters kept the public informed of Britain's martial impotence. After three years, enough men and money ultimately bought victory but the price was high. Too many flaws had been revealed in the army; meaningful military reform and constructive reorganization of Britain's armed forces could wait no longer.

Military reform was an old subject to the "Soldiers of the Queen." In the twenty years from 1860 to 1880, there were eighty-nine different official investigating bodies poking about in the army's affairs.<sup>12</sup> Recommendations from these commissions were mixed, but some were far reaching, especially those concerned with improving the living conditions of the private soldier. Flogging and branding were abolished (except in war), and medical advancements and better sanitation reduced deaths from disease. Commissions could no longer be bought and sold; the Horse Guards and the War Office were combined into a single department and subordinated to the Secretary of State for War. Regiments were "localized" by linking their recruiting to a specific area. Yet, while there was progress, most measures did not go far enough, were introduced too late, or were crippled by compromise.

In 1890, Lord Hartington received a Royal Commission to review the organization and functions of the War Office and the Admiralty. His committee's report, The Report of the Royal Commissioners Appointed to

Enquire into the Civil and Professional Administration of the Naval and Military Departments and the Relation of those Departments to Each Other and to the Treasury, was a progressive document. It proposed the abolition of the position of Commander-in-Chief, the establishment of a General Staff, the formation of a Committee of Imperial Defense, and the creation of an Army Council which would be responsible for the entire army. These reforms were too radical for the ultra-conservative War Office and would not be accepted. Although these sound and proper suggestions were not acted upon, they were not forgotten.<sup>13</sup>

As the war in South Africa died down in 1902, a different type of war began back in England with the battleground in the chambers of Parliament and in the letters to the editor columns. For once, the public and the politicians were concerned about the army's failures, with the result that commission after commission was formed to investigate and report.

Among the first probes to be published in 1902 was the Report of the Committee Appointed to Consider the Education and Training of the Officers of the Army (the Akers-Douglas Committee). It was no surprise when the paper concluded that junior officers had ". . . a lack of professional knowledge and skill, and of any wish to study the science and master the art of their profession."<sup>14</sup>

Also in 1902, a Royal Warrant established the Norfolk Commission to propose the future organization of the Militia and Volunteers. Their recommendation of universal compulsory military training to replenish the reserves used in the Boer War was not politically acceptable because of England's ancient distrust of a large standing army.<sup>15</sup>

In 1903, the Report of His Majesty's Commissioners on the War in South Africa was published. These commissioners were ". . . to inquire into the supply of men, ammunition, equipment, and transport by sea and land in connection with the campaign, and into the military operations up to the occupation of Pretoria."<sup>16</sup> Over 22,200 questions were asked of 114 witnesses during the fifty-five days the committee was in session.<sup>17</sup> Their report found fault with ". . . almost every aspect of the army and its organization, from Wolseley, the then Commander-in-Chief, down to the private soldier."<sup>18</sup>

Also in 1903, the Report of the Committee Appointed by the Secretary of State for War to Enquire into the Nature of the Expenses Incurred by Officers of the Army and to Suggest Measures for Bringing Commissions within the Reach of Men of Moderate Means (Lord Stanley's Committee) formalized the common knowledge that it was impossible for an officer to live on his army salary without some other source of income.

But the most important investigative body was convened by the Prime Minister, Arthur Balfour, in 1902. It was called the War Office (Reconstitution) Committee, but was better known as the Esher Committee. Lord Reginald Esher, its chairman, was a close friend of Edward VII, and acted as the King's personal representative. Esher had gained valuable insight and experience concerning the army's problems and administration as a member of the Royal Commission that investigated the war in South Africa. Admiral Sir John (later Lord) Fisher, Sir George Clark, and Colonel F.G. Ellison were also members. Unlike other committees, this group did not take any public testimony, and when its

report was published in February, 1904, its recommendations were accepted.

Three fundamental suggestions were made: the total reorganization of the War Office, the formation of a General Staff, and the establishment of an Army Council.<sup>19</sup> From an organizational viewpoint, implementation of the first two items was obstructed by the position of Commander-in-Chief. This office was now finally abolished and Lord Roberts, who wore a Victoria Cross for forty-six years, discovered when he walked into a completely empty office, that he was the last incumbent.<sup>20</sup> He would be replaced by the new Chief of the General Staff, General Sir Neville Lyttleton. All civilian and parliamentary control of the army was wielded by the Secretary of State for War who, as chairman of the Army Council, presided over the other six members: the Chief of the General Staff (First Military Member), the Adjutant-General (Second Military Member), the Quartermaster-General (Third Military Member), the Master-General of Ordnance (Fourth Military Member), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, and the Financial Secretary. Those members opposed to any majority decision had the choice of either accepting the vote or resigning.

Implementation of the Esher Report could not be done immediately--it would take several years and the talents of an exceptional administrator, Richard Burdon Haldane, Secretary of State for War, to accomplish the myriad of details. Haldane, a brilliant lawyer, had absolutely no military experience but was wise enough to study his subject before plunging into his complex job. When asked about his intentions and ideas, he assured the concerned generals on the Army Council that he ". . . was a young and blushing virgin just united to a bronzed warrior,



and that it was not expected by the public that any result of the union appear until at least nine months had passed."<sup>21</sup>

Haldane wanted the army oriented toward an overseas mission; ". . . the primary task which rests upon the British Army is to maintain the defence of an Empire which extends over twelve millions of square miles and embraces a population of 400 million people."<sup>22</sup> This was in direct opposition to the policy set forth by Edward Stanhope, Secretary of State for War, in 1891. In a document known as the Stanhope Memorandum, the priorities from first to last of the British army were to put muscle behind the civil power in the United Kingdom, to maintain a necessary force in India, to garrison all coaling stations and fortresses at home and abroad, to provide for home defence, and if necessary, to send two corps overseas. "But it will be distinctly understood that the probability of the employment of an army corps in the field in any European War is sufficiently improbable to make it the primary duty of the military authorities to organize our forces for the defences of this country."<sup>23</sup>

As expected, the reformers attempts to restructure the military administration met stubborn resistance and delaying tactics by the more conservative officers. Petty jealousies and internal rivalries surfaced at the War Office over the new role of the General Staff which was established in September, 1906, with seventy-two officers.<sup>24</sup> Because of this turmoil and confusion about responsibilities, it was not until the period of 1907-1909 that the General Staff had a streamlined War Office became a functioning reality.<sup>25</sup> Demands for officers trained in the new

procedures spurred the Staff College at Camberly out of the doldrums and gave it a whole new meaning and purpose for existence.

Perhaps the greatest challenge that Haldane met involved the reconstitution of a national reserve of trained soldiers that was exhausted during the Boer War. Opposition was bitter, but with the King's support, Haldane finally had his way in 1907. Haldane combined the Militia and the Volunteers into a single Territorial Force that was tied to the regular army in time of war. Britain's regulars (all volunteers) were allotted to his new Field Force. This Field Force was ". . . to be so completely organized as to be ready in all aspects for mobilization immediately on the outbreak of a great war."<sup>26</sup> At the center of this Field Force lay the Expeditionary Force of six infantry divisions and one cavalry division, all of which were to be ashore in France in fifteen days. State of the art in 1907 required two months for the 80,000 men to be mobilized and transported to Europe.<sup>27</sup> And at the heart and core of the Expeditionary Force was the Aldershot Command, where the retraining of the army would begin in tactics, staff work, administration, leadership, and, most importantly, attitudes.

Previous reforms were but small gusts of air in the stale and stuffy army offices at the Horse Guards and Pall Mall. These gusts only stirred up the dust that lay thick upon the brick-red, calf-hide bound volumes of obsolete regulations, policies, and procedures. Haldane's reforms were a fresh, strong, invigorating wind that blew both the dust and the volumes from the pigeon-holes and book shelves down the twisty corridors and out of the War Office. A new sense of professionalism and purpose was injected into the army.

It was an exciting time for a forward-looking officer. Technology challenged the military to find the proper doctrine and tactics to utilize the new weapons of war such as the machine gun, airplane, wire-less communications, and the combustion engine to their fullest potential. Teamed with the advances made by science were those improvements in military methods that evolved from thoughtful analysis of practical experience. The relative worth of concepts such as the systematic cooperation between staff officers; individual marksmanship, universal military service; dismounted cavalry; imperial defence schemes; realistic training; and the building up the worth, intelligence, and initiative of the individual soldier provided the substance for acrimonious debates in and out of the military. Nearly every major magazine and periodical carried "suggestions," "replies," and "proposals" by armchair commanders, "Staff Officers," "Old Veterans," and men of note and repute.<sup>28</sup> Progressive officers intended to fuse the good of the old army--the discipline, esprit, and dependability, to the modern developments of the present.

It was difficult, however, to exorcise the ghost of the Duke of Cambridge, who, as Commander-in-Chief for more than forty years, struggled against every reform that would have changed the army from what it was in Wellington's day. Pampered products of his ultra-conservatism were many and powerful. These antiquated generals and colonels were deeply entrenched within the establishment and their minds were fossilized in a groove worn by daily repetition of duties familiar to officers at Waterloo. Nevertheless, there were many dedicated people, civilian and military, who pushed and prodded

Britain's lumbering, old, toothless lion of an army into the twentieth century and proceeded to get him into shape, outfit him with dentures. and sharpen his claws.

By 1907, Smith-Dorrien was finally in a position where he could supervise the lion's refitting and guide the refurbished army across the threshold of an entirely new era. Smith-Dorrien was not a miracle worker or a gifted genius--he was, however, a dedicated, intelligent, and forceful man who was farsighted enough to anticipate the demands of a modern war. His ideas were seasoned by more than thirty years of active service and six major campaigns. He was steeped in the mysteries of the army until his bones absorbed the crimson dye from his wool tunic. No other general on the Army List knew the British soldier and his needs as well as Smith-Dorrien. Still, he was a product of the British military system.

A review of his life and service up to 1907 is helpful since, in many ways, his career was representative of those of his contemporaries. Smith-Dorrien, however, never lost his stubborn individualism and independent approach--traits usually filed away by the "system," for though the army mill turned slowly--it usually ground fine and uniformly. Smith-Dorrien's reforms were the result of thoughtful analysis of events during those thirty years. His earlier experiences provide the depth and perspective from which those reforms may be viewed. When set against the background formed by the status of Britain's army in 1907, his achievements during his four years at Aldershot stand forth bright, clear, and proud.

<sup>1</sup> Howard N. Cole, The Story of Aldershot. A History and Guide to Town and Camp (Aldershot, England, 1951), 179.

<sup>2</sup> A. Smith-Corbett, The Retreat from Mons by One Who Shared In It (London, 1916), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 5; John Terraine, Mons, The Retreat to Victory (New York, 1960), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Basil H. Liddell Hart, The Real War (Boston, 1930), 42.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Bond, "The Late Victorian Army," History Today XI (September 1961), 624; Correlli Barnett, Britain and Her Army 1509-1970. A Military, Political, and Social Survey (New York, 1970), 341.

<sup>6</sup> Bryon Farwell, Queen Victoria's Little Wars (New York, 1972), 364-71. For example, in 1879, besides the Zulu War in South Africa and the Second Afghan War, there were expeditions against the Zakha Khell Afridis, Suliman Khel Pawindahs, Zaumukts, Mohmands, and the Sekakuni.

<sup>7</sup> A review of Great Britain's military operations in the Low Countries (1585), Germany (1623), Ireland (1689), Flanders (1795-1799), Crimea (1854), nineteenth century colonial expeditions, and in South Africa (1899-1902) reveal a discouraging continuity in poor organization, inefficient logistics, and indifferent leadership. There were a few exceptions--but only a few.

<sup>8</sup> Eric William Sheppard, A Short History of the British Army (4th ed., Westport, Connecticut, 1974), 481, originally published in 1950 by Constable & Co., Ltd., London and reprinted by Greenwood Press.

<sup>9</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Fuzzy Wuzzy," Departmental Ditties and Barrack Room Ballads (London, 1914), 152.

<sup>10</sup> J.F.C. Fuller, The Decisive Battles of the Western World (3 vols., London, 1963), III, 139.

<sup>11</sup> Barnett, Britain and Her Army, 340.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 334.

<sup>13</sup> Jock Haswell, The British Army, A Concise History (London, 1975), 118. Lord Esher's Committee would repeat these findings in their report published in 1904.

14 Her Majesty's Stationary Office (Hereafter referred to as H. M.S.O.), Report of the Committee appointed to consider the Education and Training of the Officers of the Army (London, 1902), 29.

15 Sheppard, A Short History 292.

16 How Britain Goes to War. A Digest and Analysis of Evidence Taken by the Royal Commission on the War in South Africa (London, 1903), 7.

17 Ibid., 11. Besides Viscount Esher, the other members were the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine, Sir George D.T. Goldie, Field-Marshal Henry W. Norman, Admiral Sir J.O. Hopkins, Sir John Edge, Sir John Jackson, Baron Strathcona and Mount Royal, and Sir Frederick Darley.

18 Barnett, Britain and Her Army, 341.

19 M. Caillard, "The War Office Fifty Years Ago." Army Quarterly and Defence Journal LXXXI (October 1955), 58. On February 6, 1904, Letters of Patent established the Army Council and the council's duties were documented by an Order in Council dated August 10, 1904. This council has remained virtually unchanged into the 1970's.

20 W.H. Hannah, Bobs, Kipling's General. The Life of Field-Marshal Earl Roberts of Kandahar (London, 1972), 232.

21 Richard Burdon Haldane, Richard Burdon Haldane, An Autobiography (London, 1929), 183.

22 Richard Burdon Haldane, Army Reform and Other Addresses (London, 1907), 46.

23 J.K. Dunlop, The Development of the British Army 1899-1914 (London, 1938), 307.

24 Byce Poe II, "British Army Reforms 1902-1914," Military Affairs XXXI (Fall 1967), 134.

25 For a thorough discussion on the rise of the General Staff in England, see Brian Bond, "The Creation and Development of the General Staff 1904-1914," The Victorian Army and the Staff College 1854-1914 (London, 1972), 212-243.

26 Dunlop, Development of the British Army, 279.

27 Barnett, Britain and Her Army, 364.

28 For example, Nineteenth Century and After, a popular magazine, illustrated the nature and scope of material about the British army presented to the public. In volume XLIX (January-June 1901) there were six articles: Lord Roberts, "Lord Roberts on Army Reform," 177-96; A. Conan Doyle, "Sham versus Real Home Army Defence," 248-67; "Our Last Effort for a Voluntary Army," 545-65; "Some Suggestions for Army Reform,"

566-79; R. Yerburch, "The Disastrous New Army Scheme," 879-900; Arthur L. Lee, "The Recruiting Question," 1056-64. Five years later, the same magazine, in volume LX (July-December 1906) contained two articles: Rt. Hon. St. John Brodrick, "Mr. Haldane's Proposals," 356-66 and A. Francis Key, "Wasted Recruits." The next volume, LXI (January-June 1907) had three: Rt. Hon. Lord Haliburton, "Universal Training as a Practical Scheme," 364-76; C.W. Radcliffe Cooke, "The Invasion Scare: A New Look," 395-404; and Colonel the Earl of Errol, "Mr. Haldane's Dream of a National Army," 542-47.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE SWORDSMITH

Horace Lockwood Smith-Dorrien, eleventh of fifteen children, was born on May 26, 1858. His father, R.A. Smith-Dorrien, was a well-established country gentleman and a colonel in the county militia. As a young boy, he was, in his own words, ". . . mischievous and wild, and credited with all minor catastrophes which happened to the family."<sup>1</sup> He was educated at Harrow where his only distinction, besides a penchant for wild escapades and pranks, was as a cross-country runner.<sup>2</sup>

Smith-Dorrien could not decide on a future vocation, and finally, in desperation, his father suggested the army--a traditional refuge for the younger sons of the gentry. Excited by this idea, Smith-Dorrien entered a crammer in 1875 to prepare for the December entrance examination to the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.<sup>3</sup>

To the astonishment of his family, he passed the exam, and upon graduation in January, 1877, joined the 95th (Derbyshire) Regiment of Foot. Since the nineteen year old "passed out with special mention," he received one year's antedate and entered his unit as a lieutenant.<sup>4</sup> His regiment was stationed at Dublin and Cork where some of his memories were of racing, dancing, and hunting--the three important aspects of a young gentleman's education.

A zest for "practical soldiering" and a restless impatience with inefficiency were two character traits that surfaced early in



Smith-Dorrien's career. In 1878, when his battalion commander refused to allow him to be released for service in the Zulu War, Smith-Dorrien by-passed his chain of command and wired directly to the War Office that he was ready to go. His unique approach worked and he received orders ". . . to proceed forthwith to Dartmouth and embark in the Edinburgh Castle." Although this act confirmed the young lieutenant's willingness to abandon established procedures and to trust in his own judgement, Smith-Dorrien later confessed that his unorthodox action ". . . was an unwarrantable piece of cheek, and inexcusable, . . ."<sup>5</sup> It would not be the last time that he would show some enterprise and disobey orders if he felt the situation merited it.

Smith-Dorrien's first assignment in South Africa was supervising oxdrawn wagons with the transport corps. Since watching oxen held few chances for glory, he volunteered to act as a courier when his duties in the supply column permitted. On January 22, 1879, he had just delivered a bundle of messages to the British camp at Isandhlwana when a vastly superior force of Zulu warriors attacked and overwhelmed the unprepared units. For his first time in combat, he did rather well; his intrepid conduct earned him nominations on two separate incidents for the Victoria Cross--England's highest award for gallantry. He was one of the five officers who survived the ensuing slaughter, and his epic escape included a three mile cross-country race against twenty Zulus. All in all, he was on the move for forty-two hours that included ". . . a stretch of twenty miles on foot, much of it at a run . . . ."<sup>6</sup>

Although he escaped the Zulus, he was subsequently caught by a greater killer of soldiers--typhoid. He was carried in a mule wagon

over seventy, tooth-grinding, primitive miles to Ladysmith where he experienced the comfort of an army hospital by spending two months on the straw-covered floor of a Dutch church. Smith-Dorrien was still too weak to walk when he heard of the final campaign to destroy the Zulus. During the night, he escaped from the hospital on his batman's back and rejoined his transportation column in support of Colonel Evelyn Wood's force.<sup>7</sup>

At the end of the Zulu War in August, 1879, Smith-Dorrien returned to Great Britain and his regiment. Two years of routine garrison duty would pass before he would have another chance to be under fire. In 1882, England sent an expedition under Sir Garnet Wolseley to stabilize the crisis in Egypt which threatened British interests.

Part of that expedition included the 95th Foot, now redesignated as the 2nd Battalion of the Sherwood Foresters, which landed in Alexandria on August 21, 1882. Smith-Dorrien was promoted the next day to captain and became the Assistant Chief of Police in Alexandria, a job that ended twelve days later when his old commander, Sir Evelyn Wood, asked him to organize an impromptu mounted infantry unit.

This hastily assembled band was required because Wolseley took all the cavalry and left Wood behind in Alexandria without a mobile force to prevent the Bedouins and Egyptian rebels from harassing their supply lines. Since the quartermaster was unresponsive to his requirements, Smith-Dorrien showed his resourcefulness and boldness by confiscating saddles from the local merchants and bluffing his way past the startled, loyal Egyptian guards so he could ransack the stables at the Khedive's palace for additional mounts and equipment. In less than thirty minutes,

he had collected a scratch force shakily astride twelve ponies, two mules, and one donkey; by dusk, he had pushed back several enemy patrols. In a few days, Smith-Dorrien had "found" enough animals to increase his force to nearly sixty men. Although his new command was not a regiment of dragoon guards, what his "somewhat motley detachment" lacked in size and horsemanship was more than compensated for by its young captain's dash, aggressiveness, and extraordinary talents in field improvisation. Smith-Dorrien performed his duties so well that Wood mentioned his exploits in his dispatches.<sup>9</sup>

Hostilities ended with Wolseley's victory at the Battle of Tel el-Kebir on September 13, and by February, 1883, Smith-Dorrien and the Sherwood Foresters had sailed for India. His first tour, however, would be quite short. On an afternoon hunt, while enroute to their cantonment at Lucknow, Smith-Dorrien injured his knee chasing a wounded peacock. After two months in the hospital in Lucknow, he ". . . was invalided home with a stiff knee, swelled as big as a football." He almost lost his leg, but after an operation and more months in bed he was declared fit toward the end of 1883 and started back to India.<sup>10</sup>

While passing through the Suez Canal, Smith-Dorrien met Sir Evelyn Wood, then Sirdar (commander) of the Egyptian army, who offered him a position in the Sudan. Duty in Egypt held a greater promise of excitement than did service with his regiment in India, so he accepted upon Wood's pledge that he would be allowed to return to England to study for the Staff College exam the first year there was no fighting. Therefore, in February, 1884, he joined a brigade under Sir Francis

Grenfell and ". . . a jolly, happy, though busy, life I had." Serving in the Sudan with him were two future Field-Marsals and twelve general grade officers.<sup>11</sup>

For his first three months, Smith-Dorrien served in an infantry battalion and then in the Camel Corps. In May, 1883, he accepted the mission to raise a battalion of Turks. Because his bad knee kept him from participating in the Nile Expedition, he was given a staff position in the rear echelons of the army. It was during this period that he met another captain, Horatio Herbert Kitchener--a man he would see many times over the years. Smith-Dorrien was offered a company of mounted infantry early in 1885, but the Sirdar refused to release him because he ". . . did the work of two and was too valuable." Smith-Dorrien was disappointed, but in March, 1885, his request for the vacancy as adjutant of a mounted infantry unit was approved because the Sirdar discovered that the young captain ". . . was not indispensable--i.e. he had gotten to know me better."<sup>12</sup>

Smith-Dorrien never missed an opportunity to see action, and his first independent command came on December 31, 1885. It consisted of a one-hundred-and-fifty-men mix of hussars, mounted infantry, Egyptian Camel Corps, and Egyptian cavalry followed by fifty men marching one day to his rear for support. He was forbidden to advance beyond a certain village, and his mission was to cooperate with a gunboat pursuing nine sailing nuggars (Arab river boats). When he reached his assigned limit, only one boat had been captured. Smith-Dorrien believed that the man on the spot had the final tactical decision and not some staff officer at a distant and uninformed headquarters. Since he had

reached his limit of advance, he could have easily turned around and proceeded back to camp having fulfilled the letter of his instructions. But in keeping with the spirit of his mission, he made the courageous decision to pursue the enemy boats, although to do so invited a possible courts-martial for disobeying orders. His command covered sixty miles in twenty-four hours and captured the remaining eight boats after a sharp fight. This coup earned the thanks of the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Frederick Stephenson), and the new Sirdar (Sir Francis Grenfell), a mention in dispatches, and one of the new decorations for gallantry--the Distinguished Service Order. "The fact that I had exceeded my instructions . . . was overlooked, and only the successful results were referred to."<sup>13</sup>

In February, 1886, Smith-Dorrien took his promised leave to begin his studies for the entrance exam for the Staff College. After two months at a crammer, he scored tenth on the test and arrived back in Egypt on June 30 in time to raise a Sudanese battalion and train it. Before he left for the Staff College in January, 1887, many of his friends felt that he was surrendering a sure success in the Egyptian army for something more indefinite. He answered that, ". . . one could never become an up-to-date modern soldier in the prehistoric warfare to be met within campaigns against the Dervishes."<sup>14</sup>

Smith-Dorrien had a grand time at the Staff College. He did ". . . not think we were taught as much as we might have been, but there was plenty of sport and not too much work."<sup>15</sup> It was the sport aspect that he concentrated on. He was a popular officer and was considered to be the ". . . dominating personality of that year."<sup>16</sup> Smith-Dorrien

initiated the Staff College Coach and was elected Master of the Drag, much to the chagrin of an ambitious cavalry classmate, Captain Douglas Haig. He somehow convinced the Commandant, General E.H. Clive, to allow the officers to hunt six days a week if they wanted. It was a long persistent rumor that after three months, Smith-Dorrien was asking directions to the library.<sup>17</sup> Despite being counceled for his inattention to his studies, he so impressed his classmates that when they drafted a complete staff for a future army corps, they listed him as the corps commander.<sup>18</sup>

Smith-Dorrien was a poor financial manager, and his expenses constantly exceeded his meager income. His sports activites and home bills contributed to a large debt of more than £300, and loans were between thirteen to fourteen percent interest.<sup>19</sup> When the two year course was completed in December, 1888, he was,

. . . anxious to get away to India as soon as possible for three reasons. (1) Because during my short stay in India, I had been attracted by the life. (2) Because the standard of soldiering there was reputed high and practical. (3) Because I had spent all my ready money and a bit more.<sup>20</sup>

He was not the first officer to go to India for the higher pay and lower costs, nor would he be the last.

In India, Smith-Dorrien's p.s.c. (passed Staff College) meant little as it was more important to have influential friends at army headquarters at Simla. Smith-Dorrien lacked both "Simla Interest" and the desire for it. For the next eight years (1889-1896), Smith-Dorrien kept the personnel clerks busy updating the assignment section of his official dossier. This was the period of his greatest professional growth. His experiences in a variety of staff and command

positions formed the bedrock to which his reforms at Aldershot would be anchored.

In an era of a provincial outlook towards branches of the army other than one's own, Smith-Dorrien broke with tradition and sought service with the cavalry and artillery. This diversity of assignments led to a clearer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each component of the army and of the complex inter-relationships between them. Years later, at Aldershot, he would draw upon these experiences for the insights required to forge the rapier.

His dedication and hard work throughout his tour in India finally came to the attention of Lord Roberts, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army and the empire's finest general. Lord Roberts marked him as one of the promising crop of future leaders and whether Smith-Dorrien wanted it or not, he definitely had "Simla Interest" now.

During these years, Smith-Dorrien learned the Hindustani language, finally cleared all of his debts, and was promoted to major fifteen days before his thirty-fourth birthday.<sup>21</sup> When the Chitral Campaign on the Northwest Frontier bogged down in 1895, he was posted as the Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General to a brigade held in reserve. Although he was with the unit from April until it was disbanded in August, the campaign was over before his brigade was in action.

He did, however, see action on the race track. With Hurbert Gough, another future general as his jockey, Smith-Dorrien found the time in the Winter of 1895/96 to win nineteen horse races including the Army Cup, but his winnings of 13,000 rupees barely covered the expenses of maintaining his thirty-horse stud that included different horses for

racing, polo, pig sticking, harness, and just plain riding.<sup>22</sup>

In the Fall of 1896, while on leave in England, Smith-Dorrien heard that Kitchener, Sirdar of the Egyptian army, was preparing for the Nile Expedition. He volunteered, but there was no position available. Several days later, on October 5, he discovered that his unit was on orders for an expedition into Afghanistan against the Afridis in the Tirah Valley. By the 23rd, he was in Bombay, and when he arrived at the advance base camp four days later he was given command of a half-battalion. Expert hostile snipers armed with modern rifles, bitterly cold and strong winds, and some of the most rugged mountains in the world were basic ingredients of warfare in the Khyber Pass. It was ". . . the most dangerous and arduous struggle in which British troops have been engaged since the Indian Mutiny."<sup>23</sup>

His brother officers were fortunate having Smith-Dorrien as their resourceful mess president. Even in one of the most forsaken places in creation, he managed on occasion to produce "A-1 food; pig's cheek, pate de fois gras, stilton, and port."<sup>24</sup> While on campaign, Smith-Dorrien wrote many letters to his friend and mentor, Sir Evelyn Wood about operations in the Tirah and the army's inadequacies. It took until April, 1898, to subdue the tribesmen, and by that time, Smith-Dorrien had been mentioned in dispatches for gallantry in action and had received a brevet promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel effective May 20, of that year.<sup>25</sup>

In April, 1898, Smith-Dorrien took eight months leave, while enroute home, he volunteered once more to serve under Kitchener in Egypt. This time the Sirdar told him that he could have his Sudanese



battalion back. "After some search I found the 13th and announced that I had come to take command, and, as no one objected I did."<sup>26</sup> Throughout the campaign and particularly at the Battle of Omdurman, Smith-Dorrien was deeply impressed with the firepower of machine guns and modern rifles; on the battlefield, he saw ". . . enough horrors to last a lifetime."<sup>27</sup>

Smith-Dorrien nearly made the history books as the commander of the British forces in a war with France over the "Fashoda Incident." Kitchener picked Smith-Dorrien to be the senior officer in command to accompany him to Fashoda, where a small French force had occupied a fort on disputed territory. Fortunately, Kitchener defused the delicate situation. For his services, Smith-Dorrien received the rank of Brevet-Colonel on November 16, 1898, and was mentioned once again in dispatches.<sup>28</sup>

By December, Smith-Dorrien was in Malta where on January 1, 1899, he took command of the 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters. He experimented with his new training ideas in combined operations, marksmanship, and the use of the machine gun. Smith-Dorrien was one of the few officers who cared deeply about his men and took every opportunity to improve their life. He helped the unit chaplain organize a soldiers' and sailors' club with the provision that religion would only be discussed in a room on the top floor.<sup>29</sup> Malta's climate aggravated Smith-Dorrien's occasional bouts of fever and neuralgia--his legacy of two decades of hard campaigning in unhealthy regions. His health otherwise was excellent for a man of forty-two.

In 1899, Smith-Dorrien turned down Kitchener's offer of the Governorship of the province of Omdurman and its £1000 salary for a chance in Britain's latest colonial involvement in South Africa. After repeated pleas to Sir Evelyn Wood, his unit received orders for the Boer War.

They arrived in Durban, South Africa on December 13, 1899, during the "Black Week"--an unparalleled set of defeats. Sir Redvers Buller was beaten at Colenso as was General Sir William Gatacre at Stormberg. Lord Methuen was whipped at Modder River and Magersfontein. Sir George White was besieged at Ladysmith after a fiasco at Nicholson's Nek, and Mafeking and Kimberly were cut off and surrounded.

After this sobering series of defeats, the British army went into a period of relative inactivity, during which time its leaders reorganized their forces and pondered what strategy they should follow. Smith-Dorrien was exasperated with the delays. "I was very cross because I was forced to observe Christmas Day as a holiday, and am afraid I made some pointed remarks to the effect that we were not out there to observe Christmas Day."<sup>30</sup>

England sent Lord Roberts out to save the day with Major-General Lord Kitchener as his Chief of Staff. Smith-Dorrien knew that the tempo would pick up now that "Bobs" was in command.

Smith-Dorrien worked long and hard preparing for action but on returning late to camp on February 2, he wrote, ". . . the fatigue was knocked bang out of me by a wire from Lord Roberts offering me a brigade."<sup>31</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's brigade, the 19th, had just been formed from four solid, dependable units, the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders, 2nd Battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry, and the Royal Canadian Regiment. It was part of the 9th Division under General Sir Henry Colville, an inept officer, who would later be relieved of command. Nine days after assuming command, Smith-Dorrien was promoted to Major-General (February 11, 1900). He thereby became one of the youngest generals in the British army.

Smith-Dorrien raged against the poor tactics that wasted lives to no effect. At Paardeberg, February 20, 1900, in the presence of Lord Roberts and Sir John French, the new general successfully resisted the suggestions of his two superiors, Colville and Kitchener, to assault an entrenched laager over open ground. In the end, Smith-Dorrien's views on a bombardment and on sapping trenches forward to a closer assault position were finally accepted.<sup>32</sup> Once, upon receiving a senseless order from Colville to withdraw immediately, an act that would force him to leave wounded and guns behind, Smith-Dorrien, outraged at such stupidity, complied with the letter of the order. He sent a few men to the rear but then organized a skillful withdrawal under heavy fire and brought back the killed, wounded, and guns without any additional casualties. When he went to make his report, Colville was asleep in a farm house with orders that he was not to be disturbed; ". . . and perhaps it was just as well, for I was boiling with indignation, and might have said a bit more than was discreet."<sup>33</sup>

Smith-Dorrien spent long hours inspecting all the troops to see that they were getting supplies, equipment, and food. About the latter

he was most careful. Once, he sent a telegram to the Director of Supplies at Pietretief:

Many thanks for the bread; one sort excellent, the other is causing heavy casualties. You might use your influence with the Lieutenant-General and send large quantities of the latter to all Boer laagers, for I am convinced that such a measure would hasten termination of the war; as long as they don't use the bread as projectiles.<sup>34</sup>

Smith-Dorrien was one of the few generals to emerge from the war with his reputation enhanced. Lord Roberts thought him the best brigadier in South Africa and so did another commander, Lieutenant-General Ian Hamilton. Sir John French wrote to him, "Selfishly I often wish you back again. I would give anything to have you helping me direct these operations . . . ."<sup>35</sup> Smith-Dorrien was ". . . an active, fearless, fighting soldier, who was not afraid of responsibility and and could get the best out of his troops."<sup>36</sup> The London Gazette published his name in three different dispatches.<sup>37</sup>

On April 22, 1901, Smith-Dorrien was quite disappointed to hear that he was to leave the war and become the Adjutant-General of the Indian army. Next to the position of Commander-in-Chief, this was the most important post in India. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, knew that the Indian army was woefully inadequate. He felt that Lord Kitchener as its Commander-in-Chief would be a start toward rectifying the situation. Lord Roberts, who replaced his arch-rival, Sir Garnet Wolseley, as Commander-in-Chief of the British army in December, 1900, knew that Kitchener and Curzon, both egotistical hotheads, would need a smooth, dedicated, professional to act as a buffer between them. For that reason he selected Smith-Dorrien to be the Adjutant-General.

Enroute to India, Smith-Dorrien was allowed home leave. At a dinner party given in his honor, a member of Parliament asked him how England might be best prepared for a future war. Smith-Dorrien, unaware of any press coverage, sketched an outline for compulsory service. Next morning, his scheme made the papers, and a furious Lord Roberts called him in to explain. Roberts also supported universal military training, but it was contrary to the government's policy at the time. Robert's influence and Smith-Dorrien's written apology to the Secretary of State for War, Sir John Brodrick, smoothed the episode over.<sup>38</sup>

Since Kitchener was still fighting Boers, Smith-Dorrien went on to Simla to assume his duties and initiate the long-overdue reforms. At every turn, he was blocked by the Military Department which answered only to the Viceroy. This dual control of the army was a severe handicap. Curzon had an almost pathological dislike for the army and its officers, and soon the feeling was mutual. Smith-Dorrien was frustrated and angered. He concluded that ". . . after struggling for eleven months, flapping against the bars of my cage, I decided finally that my position was intolerable, that I was drawing my pay under false pretenses, and I tendered my resignation . . . ." <sup>39</sup>

General Sir Arthur Power Palmer, Acting Commander-in-Chief, convinced Smith-Dorrien to take leave instead and to report to Kitchener about the obstacles awaiting him. Smith-Dorrien took advantage of the leave to get married to Miss Olive Croten Schneider. She was the niece of General Palmer. By October 23, they were back in Simla; Smith-Dorrien had agreed to Lord Kitchener's proposal of remaining as Adjutant-General until a suitable replacement could be found.

Kitchener was true to his word, and in April, 1903, Smith-Dorrien was awarded with one of the most important troop commands in India--that of the 4th Infantry Division at Quetta, Baluchistan. Now he was free at last to expand his training ideas and reforms. He had moving targets installed to add realism and taught the soldiers to "snap shoot."

One of the most useful innovations Smith-Dorrien ever developed was the "staff ride." Through this technique of tactical exercises without troops, officers could solve problems and react to new situations and orders under service conditions. After the exercise a conference would be held, actions critiqued, and the lessons learned were published and distributed.<sup>40</sup> This system is used, practically without change, in nearly every army today. Smith-Dorrien, who well understood the limitations of the cavalry, submitted his ideas on cavalry training to the Inspector-General of Cavalry, Major-General Douglas Haig, who told him that, ". . . he could not improve upon it."<sup>41</sup>

Sir Ian Hamilton, who was observing the Russo-Japanese War, kept a very interested Smith-Dorrien posted on the war's developments. Smith-Dorrien took his cue from these operations and had his companies, batteries, and squadrons prepare a massive trench system. This system had a front of 2000 yards, was three trench lines deep, complete with bunkers, latrines, command posts, and billets. All this work was done as part of the small unit training held in the spring and summer. During the annual autumn maneuvers, his 6000 men dug in 1700 yards from the "enemy entrenchments." During each night, they would sap forward, resupply, and dig in again before daylight. During the day everyone

had to remain hidden in their shelters. After four days of creeping forward, the command assaulted the position using live ammunition. At the conclusion, each unit was led by their captain through the entire system and the whole operation was discussed in detail. Smith-Dorrien, with justifiable pride wrote, "In . . . looking back on it now, it was quite a good forecast of the trench warfare in the Great War."<sup>42</sup> While on leave in 1905, he observed the German Autumn Maneuvers and felt that the German tactics did not respect the awesome power of the defence protected by trenches and barbed wire and equipped with machine guns by the way the soldiers attacked these positions in close order.<sup>43</sup>

Army headquarters, which was notoriously stingy, recognized Smith-Dorrien's superior training concepts by providing additional funds for expanded training programs. Smith-Dorrien's reforms were not limited to training. Since the recreation grounds were two miles from camp, they were not used often. He, therefore, had an ugly, rocky slope terraced off into cricket and football fields and planted with trees. His soldiers used ". . . a not very attractive native Bazaar, with all its attendant ills for them to spend their time in."<sup>44</sup> To remedy this, Smith-Dorrien borrowed money on his personal account, leased the land, and in the middle of his new grounds ". . . built a really fine club for the men, with a dry and wet canteen, supper rooms, a billiard room with four tables, a dance-room convertible into a theatre, and some fourteen hot and cold baths."<sup>45</sup> It was run entirely by non-commissioned officers and men. Much to the wonder of many, there was little rowdiness.

Years at Quetta passed by quickly, and Smith-Dorrien and his wife were quite happy. Their first son, "Gren," was born in February, 1904.

In February, 1906, he ". . . received the very gratifying news that I had been made full Colonel of my old regiment, the Sherwood Foresters."<sup>46</sup> It was an honor that he cherished always and a responsibility he never failed. There were many parties, dinners, and hunts. Among the guests--private and official was the future King of England--the Prince of Wales. Smith-Dorrien and the Prince became fast friends and the Prince would visit as often as royal duties would permit.

Smith-Dorrien's area of responsibility covered a large region with nearly 800 miles of frontier, the majority of it with Afghanistan. This required him to make long and frequent inspection tours. Although there were many forty-mile days on horseback, his attractive wife usually accompanied him; they both enjoyed these trips immensely. A major purpose of these trips was to enable him and his soldiers to become better acquainted. "It was my invariable rule, if I dined with a regiment and was invited to play pool, to accept, as I found that a game round the billiard table gave me a better opportunity of getting to know the officers personally than any other way."<sup>47</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's reputation was growing fast and in the right places. He was responsible for the building and impetus behind the Indian Staff College. In 1906, he was promoted to Lieutenant-General. When he was on leave in 1905, Lord Fisher and Sir George Clarke convinced him to brief the Secretary of State for India (Viscount Morely) and the Secretary of State for War (Richard Burdon Haldane) on the Kitchener-Curzon feud. Both secretaries were impressed with him. When Curzon was fired and Lord Minto became the new Viceroy, Minto forwarded glowing reports about Smith-Dorrien to Haldane and Morely. Both the Prince of Wales



and Kitchener recommended Smith-Dorrien to Haldane as Sir John French's replacement at the Aldershot Command. Lord Fisher and others expressed a desire that he be placed on the newly created Army Council. When Haldane sought nominations for French's successor, those asked listed their favorite general first and Smith-Dorrien second.

Fortunately, Haldane recognized Smith-Dorrien as an unparalleled troop trainer and exactly the perfect man for Aldershot where the Secretary of State for War's reforms would be hammered into reality by the new commander's drive.<sup>49</sup> The Times carried the posting: "Lieut.-Gen. H.L. Smith-Dorrien, C.B., D.S.O. (Notts and Derby Regt.) commanding the Quetta Division, Indian Army, has been appointed to succeed Gen. Sir John French in the Command of the Aldershot Corps. . . ."<sup>50</sup> Smith-Dorrien recorded the event as well: "Early in January of 1907, a very great event occurred in my life, for I was selected to succeed Sir John French at the end of the year as C. in C. at Aldershot, the plum of the British Army. . . ."<sup>51</sup>

Aldershot, Smith-Dorrien's plum, had been the traditional home of the British army since it was formally opened by Queen Victoria in July, 1855.<sup>52</sup> It is located approximately thirty miles southwest of London in the Borough of Hampshire. Its name was derived from the Old English "alorsceat," meaning "wood of alders."<sup>53</sup> King Alfred's will (ca. 880-85 A.D.) contained the first written reference to Aldershot and over the years there have been nineteen different spellings.<sup>54</sup>

Eighteenth century outlaws like Dick Turpin and "Springheeled Jack" used the desolate wastelands and heath of Aldershot as sanctuaries. These same attributes led the area to be selected in 1792 as the site

for the first large scale maneuvers ever held by the British army. Aldershot's military association, however, is far older; it contains an earthen fort called Ceasar's Camp. This fort was built on the probable borders of the Regni and Belgae tribes and was used later by the Romans who improved upon it.<sup>55</sup>

In 1853, the government decided to purchase the area for "military training purposes" because Dublin was the only other location large enough to support brigade field days. The Prince Consort was involved in the selection of the grounds and locations of the barracks. Permanent construction began in 1853 on what is now Wellington Lines and was completed in 1859. During this period, 1200 wooden huts were built on the present location of the Stanhope and Marlborough Lines.<sup>56</sup>

By 1861, Parliament had spent approximately £144,650 for about 8000 acres. For the first two decades, the troops at Aldershot regarded it as a "soldiers penal settlement."<sup>57</sup> It was the mobilization base for many major campaigns; Crimea was the first and was followed by the Zulu War (1879), Egypt (1882), Sudan (1885-89), Sudan (1896-98), the Ashanti Expedition (1895), and the Boer War (1899-1902).<sup>58</sup>

During the first five years of the twentieth century, very little of the spirit and substance of the Haldane reforms had trickled down to the soldier. Military life at Aldershot was well established and the regiments were comfortable in the routine. These regiments and their component parts formed the steel core from which Smith-Dorrien would fashion Britain's rapier.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE: THE SWORDSMITH

<sup>1</sup> Horace Smith-Dorrien, Memories of Forty-eight Years of Service (London, 1925), 2.

<sup>2</sup> John Fortescue, Following the Drum (London, 1932), 251. Some of Smith-Dorrien's classmates rose to distinction. They were W.H. Grenfell (Lord Desborough), Walter H. Long (Viscount), Lords Freddy and Ernest Hamilton, the Hon. Sir John Fortescue, Punch Hardinge (Viscount) and his brother, C. Hardinge (Lord H. of Penshurst). Smith-Dorrien was the fag of the Hon. Robert Milnes (Marquess of Crewe). Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 2.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 10-20. Although Smith-Dorrien's actions "...drew laudatory letters from the War Office," the nominations for the Victoria Cross were improperly submitted and since he did not have any influence at the Court, the issue was dropped. After World War I, Smith-Dorrien wrote, "In view of my latest experiences, I am sure that the decision was right, for any trivial act of good samaritanism I may have performed that day would not have earned a M.C. [Military Cross], much less a V.C. amidst the deeds of real heroism performed during the Great War 1914-18."

He and four other officers survived the massacre at Isandhlwana because they each wore a blue patrol jacket that day. Cetuywayo, the Zulu king, told his impis that only the red-coats were worth killing as the others were mere civilians. Smith-Dorrien was also one of the first officers to return to Rorke's Drift after the station's desperate stand. Captain Bromhead, one of two officers at Rorke's Drift, gave Smith-Dorrien eleven revolver cartridges when Smith-Dorrien was enroute to Isandhlwana. Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> By the end of the war, Smith-Dorrien was mentioned in dispatches twice (London Gazette, 15 and 21 March, 1879) and had received the Zulu Campaign Medal with clasp. Creagh O'Moore and E.M. Humphris, The Distinguished Service Order 1886-1923 (London, 1978), 8. Smith-Dorrien displayed his initiative and resourcefulness in the transport business. At the conclusion of the Zulu War, he was involved getting the men and supplies back down to Durban. Somehow, he had obtained an excellent light buggy and was positive that it would be appropriated by some senior officer. To neutralize this threat, he removed one wheel and had it buried. When the last disappointed officer had departed, Smith-Dorrien "found" the wheel and used the vehicle for the remainder of the campaign. Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 31.

<sup>8</sup> In May, 1881, the British army was reorganized as part of Lord Cardwell's reforms. Thus, the 45th (Nottinghamshire) Regiment was linked to the 95th (Derbyshire) Regiment to form the 1st and 2nd Battalions (respectively) of the Sherwood Foresters. Arthur Swinson, ed., A Register of the Regiments and Corps of the British Army (London, 1972), 197, 230.

<sup>9</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 31-44. Wood's superior bore a grudge against Wood and deleted all recommendations that Wood forwarded. Ibid., 43; Evelyn Wood, From Midshipman to Field-Marshal (London, 1906), II, 150-51.

<sup>10</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 45-6.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 49. These officers were: Field-M Marshals Lord Grenfell and Lord Kitchener; Generals Sir J. Wodehouse, Sir Leslie Rundle, Sir Archibald Hunter, Sir A. Wynne, Sir Francis Wingate; Lieutenant-Generals Sir Herbert Chermiside, Sir H.F. Grant; Major-Generals Sir H. Hallam-Parr, Sir Thomas Fraser, Sir Thomas Gallwey; and Brigadier-Generals Conyers Surtees and T.E. Hickman.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 49-53.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 62-7.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Bond, The Victorian Army and the Staff College 1854-1914 (London, 1972), 141.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.; A.J. Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed: Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien and His Enemies (London, 1970), 25; Robert Walton, "Odd Man Out. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien" (Typewritten), 13.

<sup>18</sup> Walton, "Odd Man Out," 14, quoting a letter from Colonel Barnardston to Smith-Dorrien, August 17, 1905, S.B. II, Smith Dorrien Papers.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 68.

<sup>21</sup> Walton, "Odd Man Out," 16. Smith-Dorrien would have been prompted earlier, but, before he came to India he apparently jilted a girl whose family were good friends with Sir George Harman, who was the military secretary to the War Office. Letter from Smith-Dorrien's older brother, Algy, to Smith-Dorrien, July 24, 1891; Algy to General H.N. Crealock, July 24, 1891, Smith-Dorrien Papers, as quoted by Walton; O'Moore, The Distinguished Service Order, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed, 26.

<sup>23</sup> Charles E. Callwell, Small Wars, Their Principles and Their Practice (London, 1909), 289.

- 24 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 73-88.
- 25 O'Moore, The Distinguished Service Order, 8. Smith-Dorrien's exploits were in the dispatch published in the London Gazette, September 30, 1898.
- 26 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 101.
- 27 Ibid., 120.
- 28 O'Moore, The Distinguished Service Order, 8.
- 29 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 136.
- 30 Ibid., 141.
- 31 Ibid., 143.
- 32 Ibid., 155.
- 33 Ibid., 179.
- 34 Ibid., 284.
- 35 Letter from General Neville Chamberlain (Lord Roberts secretary) to the Secretary of State for War, Lord Lansdown, August 28, 1900, H.P. 24/71 10/1; Ian Hamilton to Chief of Staff, June 2, 1901, WO 105/8; Sir John French to Smith-Dorrien, Spring 1902 in Smith-Dorrien's letter file, April 27-May 5, 1915, Smith-Dorrien Papers, all above as quoted by Walton, "Odd Man Out," 22.
- 36 Fortescue, Following the Drum, 260
- 37 O'Moore, The Distinguished Service Order, 8. (London Gazette February 11 and April 16, 1901, and July 29, 1902).
- 38 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 295-96.
- 39 Ibid., 298.
- 40 Ibid., 325-26. John Terraine credits Douglas Haig with the development of the Staff Ride, but this is incorrect. Haig certainly advocated its use and refined it, but Smith-Dorrien was the originator. Walton, "Odd Man Out," 27.
- 41 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 326.
- 42 Ibid., 337-38.
- 43 Ibid., 332-33; Walton, "Odd Man Out," 29.
- 44 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 323.

45 Ibid., 324. Smith-Dorrien was the legal owner of the club and property since he paid for it himself with a loan. The profits from the club paid the loan off. Authorities wanted to charge the men for using the club but Smith-Dorrien insisted that the men would use it free of charge. This was finally agreed to in 1911. Ibid.

46 Ibid., 332.

47 Ibid., 321.

48 Walton, "Odd Man Out," 31.

49 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 339; Letter from Viscount Morely to Lord Minto, December 7, 1906, Morely-Minto Correspondence Mss. Eur. D. 573/1; Sir Arthur Bigge to Smith-Dorrien, May 3, 1906; Haldane to Smith-Dorrien, December 18, 1906, and January 28, 1907, Smith-Dorrien Papers as quoted by Walton, "Odd Man Out," 32-33.

50 The Times, March 25, 1907, 7.

51 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 339.

52 Cole, The Story of Aldershot, 46.

53 Ibid., 12.

54 Alreshete (ca. 1248), Aldresholt, Alreshut, Alreshute, Alresshute, Alreshott, Alrischoot, Alreshate, Alreschate, Aldershate, Aldershut, Aldershute (14th century), Alderschote, Aldershare (ca. 1575), Aldrisshot, Aldrisshott, Addershot (ca. 1642-45), Aldershott, and Aldershot. Ibid., 11.

55 Ibid., 1, 21, 13.

56 Ibid., 25.

57 A.E. Sullivan, "When Aldershot Meant Arcadia," Army Quarterly and Defence Journal CII (April 1972), 370.

58 Cole, The Story of Aldershot, 29-35, 110-11.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE SWORD'S CORE

When England thought of her army, she usually thought in numbers of regiments and not in numbers of men. Regiments were an institution most peculiar to the British army. Nearly every army in the world had them, but most did not consider them as living shrines of glory. Royal decrees, warrants, and regulations; War Office directives, circulars, and memoranda; and various General Orders notwithstanding, each regimental commander ran his unit as he saw fit. Once assigned to a regiment, a soldier would remain with the regiment for the rest of his military career. Officers and sergeants were careful to nurture the idea that the regiment was the new recruit's home.

Field-Marshal Sir Garnet Wolseley once said, "Military spirit is made up of trifles. The soldier is a peculiar animal that can alone be brought to the highest efficiency by inducing him to believe that he belongs to a regiment which is infinitely superior to the others around him."<sup>1</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by General Sir Ian Hamilton when he wrote, "The soldier feels the regiment solid about him. The Regiment! It is impossible for the foreigner to realize what that word means to a British soldier. The splendour--the greatness--the romance of this awe-inspiring wonderful creation in which he himself is privileged to have his being!"<sup>2</sup> But perhaps Rudyard Kipling best expressed this concept when he wrote that the regiment was the soldier's

. . . father, his mother, and indissolubly wedded wife, and that there was no crime under the canopy of heaven blacker than that of bringing shame on the Regiment, which was the best-shooting, best drilled, best set-up, bravest, most illustrious, and in all respects most desirable Regiment within the compass of the Seven Seas.<sup>3</sup>

By 1907, a regiment ceased to exist as a tactical unit. Each battalion retained its regimental title so the word "regiment" and "battalion" were used for the same organization. Even though "battalion" was more precise, i.e. 2nd Battalion West Yorkshire Regiment, the use of its regimental designation was more common--the West Yorkshires.

There were twenty-three of these regiments at Aldershot--three of cavalry and twenty of infantry. These forces were organized into one brigade of cavalry and two infantry divisions of three brigades each. In an infantry brigade there were four battalions. Each division also had units from the Royal Engineers and the Royal Artillery to support their operations. There were eighteen companies of the Army Service Corps, nine companies from the Royal Army Medical Corps (R.A.M.C.) and three companies from the Army Ordinance Corps providing general support at Aldershot. Also, there were four companies of Royal Engineers for communications, two Balloon companies, two Bridging Trains, and Military Police to round out the command. Since Aldershot was also the "home of the army," several schools were located there--the Balloon School, the School of Instruction for Mounted Infantry, School of Gymnastics, School of Signalling, and the Army Veterinary School.<sup>4</sup>

Besides his personal staff of an assistant military secretary and an aide-de-camp, Smith-Dorrien had his General Staff of four officers



and an Administrative, Technical, and Departmental Staff. This latter staff was headed by Major-General H.M. "Wise Bob" Lawson whose task was to supervise the Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, the Assistant Quartermaster-General, the Staff Officer for the Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery, the Chief Engineer, the Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport, the Principle Medical Officer, the Principle Veterinary Officer, the Assistant Director of Ordinance Stores, and the Chief Accountant.

A major purpose of any staff is to assist the commander in his control over the units assigned to him and to see to the day-to-day details of administering to an army. This is no simple task if it is to be done effectively. Every military organization is structured to provide food, shelter, and clothing, albeit sometimes of doubtful quality, and training in time of peace, so that when the army is required on the battlefield it is able to accomplish its assigned mission.

Ultimately, the object of all this attention and the subject of countless different and often meaningless reports and returns that were required daily, weekly, monthly, or "as appropriate," was the British soldier. Basically, England's fighting man remained relatively unchanged over the centuries since Hastings. Most of Britain's great victories of arms were based upon the rugged durability and unflinching dependability of the private soldier. When wisely and gallantly led, he was capable of accomplishing incredulous feats. Unfortunately, "wisely" and "gallantly" were often mutually exclusive terms. Britain's preference to ". . . do this business with the cold iron!"--the bayonet--hints at this steadfastness of her soldiers and her leaders' confidence in them.<sup>5</sup>

When a young man "took that fatal shilling" and became a recruit, a transformation process began. He would be put in a mold of discipline and duty filled with a cement mixed of pipeclay, bootblack, and beer. This mold would be set out on the drill field to cure under the watchful eyes of colour-sergeants and the awesome presence of the Regimental Sergeant-Major. While the new soldier was forming in his mold, he would be imprinted by stories and unit legends told by old soliders about older soldiers' exploits with bayonet and bottle in battle and at the bar. When peer acceptance and a superior's approval lifted the "recruity" from his matrix, the newly minted soldier would forever carry his mold's stamp of duty and discipline. Next, he would be dipped into his regiment's unique blend of traditions and customs, many whose purpose and origin were so old that Wellington's men had forgotten them. Then the soldier would be buffed to a shine by the command's silken battle streamers which were soaked in that magic, intangible, yet real and all-pervasive substance called honor--regimental honor.

While there may be a flawed casting produced by the stress of the procedure and revealed by a heavily inked defaulters sheet, the flaw often was in the raw material and not in the process, old and outdated as it was. Nevertheless, this system could bind the misfits to do their duty on the skirmish line or in the square.

England's public opinion of the social and moral worth of her soldiers was in a transition period from between a feeling of disgust and pity to one between chilled tolerance and begrudged respect. This came about as a result of the comparatively large numbers of men involved in the Boer War and excellent and frequent press coverage of the conflict.

This favorable exposure of the army led to a better understanding of the soldier by the civilians. But old attitudes and prejudices die hard and signs could still be found that read, "No servants in livery, dogs, or soldiers admitted."<sup>6</sup> Slowly, very slowly, soldiering was becoming a socially tolerable profession for a young man.

New recruits were smaller in stature than those of previous decades and tended to be from the large industrial centers rather than rural settings. At Aldershot, the daily routine of the recruit had changed very little over the years. Depending on the time of the year, reveille was between 4:30 and 6:30 A.M. If the soldier joined a cavalry unit, he had fifteen minutes to wash and dress before roll call for early morning stables. After marching down to the stables, he would air out the horse's bedding and groom his horse for one hour. Then the horses were taken to water, brought back to their stalls, and fed. He returned to his barracks, had breakfast, and changed from canvas overalls to service dress for riding school that lasted until 10:30 A.M. When riding school was over, he took his horse back to the stables, returned to his barracks, and changed back into his canvas outfit and had about ten minutes to himself before he heard the trumpeter sound "stables." He went back down to his horse which he groomed until the animal was "passed clean" and then the recruit could start on his saddle and other horse furniture--a job, that at best, required an hour. This task was usually finished by dinner time (1:00 P.M.) for which one hour was allowed. After dinner, the soldier had to change clothes again to prepare for an hour of dismounted drill with sword. When this drill ended at 3:00 P.M., the recruit went back to his room once more; this time to

change into his "gymnasium outfit." After an hour at the gym, he had until "stables" at 5:00 P.M. to clean his sword and other items of his personal equipment. At the five o'clock stables parade, the orders for the next day were read, after which the soldiers were marched back down to the stables. When the horses were watered, groomed, fed, and bedded down, the men could have tea, finish cleaning their equipment, get ready for tomorrow, and relax until "lights out" at 10:15 P.M.

In the infantry--musket, bayonet, and foot drill took the place of stables and the infantryman's barracks was subjected to a far more strenuous standard of spotlessness than the cavalryman's. For the poor gunner, he had his artillery piece as well as the horses and harness to maintain and keep in immaculate condition.<sup>7</sup>

Nearly every aspect of the soldier's life was codified in minutest detail by tradition, regulation, or order. For example, below is the first four lines of a sixteen-line instruction on how the cloak should be attached to the saddle.

The two baggage straps to be passed through the slots on the rear arch, then through the slots on the front arch of the luggage saddle, the points passing through from rear to front. The cloak rolled 20 inches long, to be placed on the center of the luggage saddle. One pair of short traces are then taken and the hooks at one end passed through the rings of the other end, the second pair are then passed through the first, and their ends secured.<sup>8</sup>

Home to the soldier was his barracks--a long room with a row of narrow cots, eighteen inches apart, down each wall. Mattresses were three sections of coir (coconut fiber) stacked at the head of the bed. Above each cot were pegs and a shelf for each man's equipment and kit. By 1912, the authorities had unbent enough to allow the men to decorate

their areas with photographs and small pictures. To secure his personal belongings, each soldier was provided a small box which was kept under his cot. Older soldiers claimed the warmer corners of the room which were known as "Dumb Chummy's." Standing in the center of the room between backless benches were two white-scrubbed tables set on black iron trestles. Tubs, mess pails, and tin utensils were stacked at each end of the tables.<sup>9</sup>

Sanitary facilities were "outside," and the open barracks provided precious little privacy and practically no peace and quiet. With twenty to thirty men per room, the singing, talking, cursing, and snoring created a considerable din which was often punctuated by the outraged shriek caused by a well thrown boot or the retching of a drunken comrade. One young soldier, when asked how he liked his first night in a cell of the guardhouse for some minor offense, answered, "Very well; it was the first quiet night I have had since I joined."<sup>10</sup>

An all-important part of barracks life revolved around the building's maintenance. Floors and tables were washed and scrubbed, the table trestles and benches were blackleaded, the walls were whitewashed whether they needed it or not, and everything was dusted again and again. When this was done, each soldier had his own kit to keep in order and ready for inspection. For this "parade," every item of issue plus those that the man was to provide from his meager pay had a defined location in relation to other items, a painstakingly exact method of display, and a demanding standard of maintenance. Those items missing or damaged would be "put down" against the soldier and he had to pay for its replacement. Specks of soot in the coal scuttle, buttons that did not sparkle, or

dust on a rifle barrel were cause for the entire kit to be re-inspected after the necessary corrections were made.<sup>11</sup>

Insistence on a "smart" appearance kept otherwise idle soldiers occupied and tended to build individual and unit pride. This fetish for "spit and polish," however, often was carried to the most ridiculous extremes. In the more posh cavalry regiments, it was common for the inside of stable wheelbarrows to be scrubbed to a gleam and pitchfork tines polished. Brick dust and steel-link burnishers were used on all metal parts instead of the official standard of "free from rust and slightly oiled." Instead of the regulation "soft soap and oil," leather was ruined by repeated applications of "fake." This was a mysterious concoction of turpentine, heel-ball, harness composition, and as legend has it, the breath of old soldiers--possibly because of its alcohol content. "Fake and burnish" stood for endless, senseless labour far in excess of the original intention of maintenance, which was to provide for a long serviceable life of equipment in order to save government money.

But it was not all work. Every soldier had time to himself and pursued his own pleasures. For many this meant beer at the canteen, and very little respect was given to the two pint per man allowance. This simple release had been around so long that it had almost become a right. In any case, the canteen was still a military establishment. It was long and usually had a low ceiling. In the center of the room was a circular bar with the "beer engines" and the remainder of the room contained the same trestle tables and benches as in the barracks. More progressive and daring unit canteens sported straight-backed wooden

chairs. Although the canteen was spartan and rigidly uniform, it was usually crowded each evening.<sup>12</sup>

Corporals and privates with good-conduct badges or a "clean defaulters sheet" and desire for the more comfortable surroundings found in the local taverns could try to obtain a pass from their commanding officer. This pass allowed them to be out between 10 P.M. and 6 A.M. Sergeants could stay out without a pass until midnight.<sup>13</sup>

The only drawback to a tankard or two at the Army and Navy, the Royal Exchange, the Beehive, the Royal Camp, the Red Lion, the Iron Duke, or any other establishment outside the gates, was that the soldier was required to wear his best uniform. Until March, 1907, clean service dress, i.e. khaki was permitted. But Smith-Dorrien's predecessor, Sir John French, put out the order that, "N.C.O.'s and men when walking out must wear review order in Aldershot Town, Lynchford Road, and Farnborough. . . ."<sup>14</sup> For many it was too much trouble to wear "Sunday kit," especially if one was prone to overindulge and the hazards in returning to the barracks posed a real threat to the appearance of the uniform. Privates were very careful of their best uniform because "sentry-go"--guard duty of two hours on guard and four hours off for a period of twenty-four hours, was performed in parade dress. At the guard mount parade, the two or three best turned-out individuals would be selected as orderlies which usually meant an easy time compared to their comrades pacing their post. At the worst, damaged kit would have to be paid for, and if it was found "dirty," the result could be charges before the colonel.

For those troopers who wanted something more refined and safer than the beer halls, there was the Royal Army Temperance Association. This organization, which was well entrenched on every army post by 1907, maintained a room in most units. For fourpence a month, a soldier could avail himself of the "temperance drinks and light eatables." Of course, any member caught using intoxicants to excess forfeited his right to the room. Patrons of this upstanding establishment were known as "bun stranglers" or "bun scramblers" for there were not always sufficient "light eatables." Since these sober soldiers avoided liquor they were known to be "on the tack" and also were called "tack-wallahs." Their inebriated counterparts of the beer canteen were "canteen-wallahs"--wallah being a Hindustani word for a follower of a trade.<sup>15</sup>

If a soldier wanted the quiet solace of a good book or to stay informed of the news, he could, for three pence a month, use the regimental reading or recreation room. It, like the canteen, was furnished with the same iron-cornered trestle tables and benches found in the barracks. All newspapers were to be neatly folded and placed flush with the edge of the table. All the books were covered in brown paper. Novels by Miss Henry Wood were in demand, next were those by Charles Dickens, and Sir Walter Scott's books were hardly touched. Bare, white-washed walls and the regulation coal box and grate emphasized the barren appearance. One observer remarked that, ". . . everything was square and straight, so that to take up a paper looks as if it might be contrary to regulations," and that the room ". . . looks as if it had resigned itself to literature against its will."<sup>16</sup>



There were advantages to staying sober, or at least half-sober, for the chance of being "run in" or "wheeled up" for being "dirty on parade" or for some other oversight of regulations or policy was reduced if a soldier was able to recognize and correct a possible shortcoming that might draw attention to himself. It did not take much to qualify for this extra attention from his superiors, a dirty button, insufficient pipeclay, or a hasty remark to the corporal usually qualified.

For minor offenses the accused was brought before his immediate superior officer who heard the charges from the senior accuser, witness statements (if any), and then asked the offender what he had to say ". . . in mitigation of his offense?" Unless the charges were trumped up, the wisest reply was, "Nothing, Sir." If the punishment was less than seven days "Confined to Barracks" (which was annotated on the soldier's record as C.B.), the officer could assign the punishment.

If the charge was more serious, the regimental commander would hear the case on the porch of the orderly room when "office" call sounded at 11:00 A.M. Confined to barracks, which was also known as "defaulters," involved doing the more unpleasant tasks of regimental life, making roll call at given intervals at the guard house in the afternoons and evenings, and drilling one hour each night in full marching order. This drill was known as "doing jankers." The bugle call for defaulters parade was called "Paddy Doyle"; presumably so-called after a long forgotten soldier who must have had to answer it often for the call to be named for him.

Really serious charges were heard by a Regimental Courts-Marital, which consisted of three officers from the accused's unit. It had the authority to reduce corporals and impose defined punishments on privates. A District Courts-Martial had greater powers in that they could reduce sergeants to the ranks. It also consisted of three officers but they could not be from the accused's regiment, and the president of the courts-martial had to be at least a major in rank.<sup>17</sup>

Not all offenders were tried according to officially recognized procedures. Privates, sergeants, and subalterns had their own closed courts-martial for their peers who violated standards of decorum. Often these self-policing methods were more effective than any regular trial as most of the sentences were not codified in the King's Regulations. If officers did not encourage these proceedings occasionally, they at least turned a blind-eye to their existence.

Soldiers, however, were not as concerned with punitive actions, official or otherwise, as they were with the quantity and quality of their food. Breakfast was usually served at 8:00 A.M., dinner at 1:00 P.M. and tea ("char") at 4:00 P.M. Many sergeant-majors were absolutely convinced that the dinner bugle and pay call were the only two bugle calls most soldiers ever knew.

For more than fifty years the official ration per man per day was three-quarters pound of meat with bone and one pound of bread which was called by the Hindustani name of "ruti." Government contractors bought flour graded as "best seconds." Though it was not contaminated as often charged, the meat was of marginal quality since the contract price was about half of what civilians paid for meat. At times, the "with bone"

loophole was used to great advantage. It was part of the duty of the orderly officer to attend the ration issue to insure government standards were kept and fairness in distribution was maintained. Bread was issued each morning at about 7:30 A.M., and it was to last for the entire day. Each morning, every company reported to their colour-sergeant whether their dinner for that day was to be "bake," "boil," or "stew." Normally, breakfast was tea, part of the bread ration, and some kind of meat. Each soldier received a "mess" or "grocery" allowance of three pence per diem that was withheld from his pay. This allowance was used to buy butter, jam, fish, eggs, bacon, vegetables and everything else the soldier ate besides his issue of meat and bread.

Dinner was the main meal of the day. Representative menus were barley soup, meat-pies, and potatoes on Monday; Tuesday was Irish stew and plain suet-pudding; and Wednesday dinners had brown curry, rice, potatoes, and current rolls. Occasionally, the legendary "plum-duff" would appear as would the enigmatic "toad-in-the hole" and "sea-pies."

Barrack rooms served as the dining hall, and each room sent a representative to the battalion cookhouse for their rations, while the corporal drew a large bucket of beer from the canteen. Dining accoutrements were primitive--no tablecloths or napkins, tinware for plates, the salt was usually on a piece of paper from which one just "pinched" the desired amount. For his beverage, each man dipped the basin from which he drank his tea into the beer bucket. In addition to inspecting the preparation of the food at 12:40 P.M. at the cookhouse, another part of the orderly officer's duty was to visit each barracks during the meal and ask, "Any complaints?" While it was not part of any soldier's

nature to praise his food, rarely was any complaint registered--probably because they believed that the subaltern making the inquiry was incapable of having any effect upon that hardened monster, the cook, and the alleged remains of commissary mules which he called meat.

These meals were prepared under the supervision of the regimental sergeant-cook, who was not necessarily a graduate of the Army School of Cookery. For this position he received an additional six pence each day. There were eight companies (approximately ninety men each) in the battalion and each company provided two privates as cooks. These men were taught the three "S's" of the cookhouse, "skim, simmer, and scour." The day for these seventeen cooks began no later than 6:30 A.M. and ended after dinner was prepared at 12:40 P.M.

Tea time was observed whenever possible. Tea, which was graded as "good medium" Cognon from China, was mixed with sugar and milk in large pails and poured into the soldiers' basins. Teapots, cups and saucers were only found in the sergeants' mess. What little was left from the morning bread ration was served with "drippings," jam, or cheese. Both tea and supper were optional and if he had the money, the trooper had his choice of buying it in the town or at the regimental coffee-bar, which was busiest between 7:30 and 9:30 P.M. Prices were kept low as possible at the coffee-bar and three pence was usually sufficient. Coffee, tea, cocoa, mineral water, and lemonade were the beverage choices. Those soldiers both hungry and low on cash could purchase a snack at the "dry bar" or grocery that sold small items of kit, cleaning equipment, and food to supplement what little that was officially provided.<sup>18</sup>

Problems of money, or more precisely, the lack of money, were a constant irritant to the soldier. At the bottom of the pay scale was the private. Rates of pay varied within the army. Below is a list of what privates in different branches were authorized per day.

	s.	d.
Household Cavalry	1	9
Cavalry of the line	1	2
Royal Horse Artillery	1	3
Royal Field Artillery	1	2½
Royal Engineers	1	2
Army Service Corps	1	2
Infantry of the line	1	0

An infantry line corporal drew 2s. 4d. daily and if a private was a good soldier, he might, after about seven years be promoted to sergeant and be authorized three shillings a day. However, his pockets rarely contained his full salary at the end of the week. To the credit side of the private's ledger, in addition to his daily shilling, was the three pence per diem "grocery allowance" (that was withheld), and a very small uniform upkeep allowance. Also, if applicable, a soldier in the infantry, cavalry, artillery, or the School of Musketry could receive daily proficiency pay that varied from 3d. to 6d.

Any private with a clean record could also draw a penny per diem for each good-conduct badge earned. This pay could be forfeited upon bad conduct. A soldier's record was reviewed for the first badge after two years of unblemished service. At the sixth, twelfth, eighteenth,

twenty-third, and twenty-eighth year of service his regimental sheet was again checked, and if it was untarnished during the previous two years, the soldier was awarded another badge and another penny per day.<sup>19</sup>

Various deductions and "stoppages" were subtracted from his magnificent sum. A penny a month was paid to the company barber. This position was held by one of the older soldiers who was not necessarily trained in the tonsorial arts. For this reason, most soldiers preferred to patronize the local civilian barber, but they had to surrender the monthly penny to the company barber anyway. A half penny a day was deducted for washing and a penny a month went to the unit tailor for minor adjustments and for marking new items of equipment. Missing or unserviceable items revealed during an inspection were drawn from the regimental quartermaster and marked against the soldier's amount due. A subscription to the recreation or reading room for a private was 3d. a month, a corporal was charged 4d., and a sergeant paid 6d. Football, cricket, or shooting club dues were also three pennies a month. There was always some damage done to the barracks or its contents due to the rowdy nature of barracks life--boots that missed their targets, fist fights, clumsy drunks, or vandalism. Where individual blame was ascertained, those responsible had to pay for it. When this was impossible, the damage charges were divided among all the occupants. This stoppage normally was about two pence a month but could go much higher.

To discourage malingering, some ingenious treasury clerk developed a policy that would provide the government a net profit of four and one half pennies per day for each sick soldier. Hospital rations were better and were worth 10d. per diem. But whether the soldier was in the

hospital through his own negligence or in the line of duty, he forfeited his mess allowance of 3d. and the value of his meat and bread (4½d.). Furthermore, an additional seven pence was deducted for each day that the trooper was in the hospital.<sup>20</sup>

After all the accounts were settled up, there was usually little left from the "guaranteed" shilling a day. If this situation was hard, it was almost impossible for soldiers who were married "off the strength." Those few soldiers fortunate enough to have their marriages recognized by the government received free quarters and additional fuel and rations. An individual married outside of the regulations was treated as single and had to reside in the barracks unless he was in receipt of a "sleeping out" pass for good conduct. Usually these men tried to obtain a "staff job" that paid a few pennies extra and did not require attendance at morning parades unless the formation was to be "as strong as possible."<sup>21</sup>

But despite the hard work and low pay, the moral and attitude of British soldier was as high as it had ever been. Pax Britannica seemed secure, and the empire was at its brightest. England's soldiers were ready for Smith-Dorrien, and he was ready for them. It was the British officers who were caught unprepared by Smith-Dorrien and his methods.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO: THE SWORD'S CORE

- <sup>1</sup> W.E. Montague, "Moral Tactics," Blackwood's Magazine CLVIII (August 1895), 180.
- <sup>2</sup> Ian Hamilton, The Soul of An Army (New York, 1921), 122.
- <sup>3</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Only a Subaltern," Under the Deodars (London, 1914), 97.
- <sup>4</sup> See Appendix A for the combat units assigned to Aldershot.
- <sup>5</sup> Sir Thomas Picton: To the 88th Foot before the assault on Badajoz, April 6, 1812. Robert D. Heinl Jr., Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations (Annapolis, 1966), 31.
- <sup>6</sup> James Milne, "The Soldiers' Bishop. An Interview with the Rev. Arthur Robins of Windsor," Windsor Magazine IX (December-May 1899), 425.
- <sup>7</sup> E. Charles Vivian, The British Army from Within (London, ca. 1910), 39-41.
- <sup>8</sup> The Monthly Army List, August 1908 (London, 1908), Army Order 211, 1908.-Army Service Corps Training, paragraph 2, section 5, page 1679.
- <sup>9</sup> Boris Mollo, The British Army From Old Photographs London, 1975), photographs 51-53; John Fabb, The Victorian and Edwardian Army From Old Photographs (London, 1975), photographs 31 and 43; Vivian, The British Army, 27; Henry Knollys, "The English Soldier As He Was and As He Is," Blackwood's Magazine CLVIII (December 1895), 858; and "Searchlight," How to Popularize Our Army, " Pall Mall Magazine XXI (May-August 1900), 466-67.
- <sup>10</sup> A.B. McHardy, "Soldiers' Barrack-Rooms," Nineteenth Century Magazine XXVIII (August 1890), 267.
- <sup>11</sup> Vivian, The British Army, 88-99.
- <sup>12</sup> Anon., "The Elevation of Thomas Atkins," Blackwood's Magazine CLXXII (October 1902), 493.
- <sup>13</sup> "Searchlight," "How to Popularize Our Army, Part II," Pall Mall Magazine XXII (September-December 1900), 380.
- <sup>14</sup> Cole, The Story of Aldershot, 164.
- <sup>15</sup> Vivian, The British Army, 150.
- <sup>16</sup> "Elevation of Thomas Atkins," 493.



17 Vivian, The British Army, 35, 56.

18 Horace Wyndham, "How Soldiers are Fed," Windsor Magazine XXII (June-November 1905), 63-69; B.W., "How Tommy Atkins is Fed," Blackwood's Magazine CLIV (December 1893), 865-68; Knollys, "The English Soldier," 858-60; "Elevation of Thomas Atkins," 497-98; and Vivian, The British Army, 145-49. A major in the Royal Field Artillery wished that the mess stoppage was much higher as to leave less money for the soldier to spend of liquor and women. C.B. Levita, "Notes Concerning Soldiers' Messing," Journal of the Royal United Services Institution (hereafter referred to as JRUSI) LI (July 1907), 890.

19 General Staff, War Office, Field Service Pocket Book 1914 (London, 1914), 179; "Searchlight," How to Popularize the Army Part II," 470; "T. Atkins," "The Army as a Career," National Review XXXI (April 1898), 238.

20 "Searchlight," How to Popularize the Army Part II," 467-72; "T. Atkins," "The Army as a Career," 236-38.

21 Vivian, The British Army, 152-54. All sergeants were allowed to marry "on the strength" as were three percent of the infantry privates of the line. Cicely McDonnell, "The Advantages of Marrying a Soldier," Army Life in the 90's Philip Warner ed. (London, 1975), 80.

## CHAPTER THREE

### FORGING THE BLADE

There was very little fanfare when Smith-Dorrien formally assumed command of Aldershot on December 16, 1907. He replaced Lieutenant-General Sir John French who was selected as the new Inspector-General of the Forces--an important and influential post.<sup>1</sup> French's reputation was based on his inflated accomplishments during the Boer War. French commanded at Aldershot for over five years, and although he was hampered by the early confusion and disruption in the War Office, he made few original contributions and had no lasting impact. Nevertheless, he was a very popular officer with his peers and superiors and was a cavalryman in the "knee-to-knee" tradition. He was a strong supporter of an aggressive, mobile cavalry--the "beau sabreur" school. French also believed in night operations and double-company training. He also tinkered ineffectively with a "striking force" organization. His motto was "Be strong and work."<sup>2</sup> All in all, if French was not particularly bright, at least he was capable in a routine manner and raised the combat effectiveness of the army. He was egotistical and opinionated, and he could be a loyal friend or a bitter enemy--both to the very end. French was the guest of honor at a farewell dinner held by his staff. A newspaper reported on portions of his speech about Smith-Dorrien:

He [French] was very fortunate in being succeeded in the command by an old friend and comrade with whom he had served in both peace and war. There was no soldier for whom he

possessed a greater regard or esteem, and that it was with the utmost confidence that he handed over the command to him.<sup>3</sup>

French would not hold this opinion of his "old friend and comrade" for long. Much later, one observer compared the commands for both officers:

Perhaps the happiest period in the history of the Camp and Aldershot Town was the five years from 1907 until 1912 when the G.O.C. [General Officer Commanding] was Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien. . . no one was really sorry when in 1907 grumpy, peppery Sir John Denton Pinkstone French left the Aldershot Command.<sup>4</sup>

Since individual training was well underway and the "Government House," (the commanding general's residence) was a "shell" that required £3000 to make it habitable, Smith-Dorrien and his family took leave shortly after he assumed command. Although it was announced that he would return on March 1, 1908, he was back on January 31.<sup>5</sup>

Smith-Dorrien felt that any improvement and modernization of the army must begin at the army's very foundation--the soldier. His experiences in Malta and at Quetta only further intensified his belief that the "other ranks" must be encouraged to start thinking for themselves and to act on their own initiative instead of only responding wooden-like to parade ground instructions. This could not be accomplished by scheduling more exercises and drill periods; it had to begin from within the soldier. To encourage this broadening of mental and moral awareness, the new G.O.C. took steps to reduce the many petty irritants of service life and to further improve the soldier's living conditions. His ideas and plans were not half-baked schemes. In 1901, Smith-Dorrien submitted a proposal entitled, "Notes for the Improvement of the Intelligence and Comforts of the Men," to the War Office. In it, he advocated, ". . . really comfortable dining rooms" separate reading and recreation rooms,

good bathrooms, and plenty of light in the barracks. "Make them comfortable in barracks and they won't be driven outside and get into trouble, but will sit down and improve their minds."<sup>6</sup> Regrettably, his plan was not acted upon then.

Once that Smith-Dorrien had the authority, he put his words into action. During his term, dining halls were built and furnished with a more home-like decor, as were the Regimental Institutes, recreation rooms and canteens. In May, 1909, the king opened the Cavalry Brigade Club. It was a "palatial establishment . . . with a separate room for the 'gentle sex.'" A description of the new club concluded, "there need be no fear that these luxurious club surroundings will convert to the soldier into a milksop, for the nature of his training nowadays is such as to more than counter-balance any social check of a softening character which might heretofore have borne influence."<sup>7</sup>

On March 4, 1908, Smith-Dorrien laid the cornerstone of a building that would be ". . . equipped with recreation rooms, coffee bar and other amenities"--the Smith-Dorrien Methodist Soldiers' Home. Several years later in October, 1911, he ". . . saw a pet project" completed; a soldiers' club similar to the one at Quetta was finished at Bordon--a primitive outlying camp at Aldershot where the 3rd Brigade was billeted.<sup>8</sup>

Smith-Dorrien ordered the installation of better lighting in the barracks and more baths. Shower baths, a specialty of his chief engineer (Colonel G.K. Scott-Moncrieff), were put "in any hitherto unused corner." Ration quality was upgraded, and the menus were varied under the G.O.C.'s supervision.<sup>9</sup>

Sports had almost become an obsession with the army during this period. Smith-Dorrien felt that there was insufficient playing areas for football, rugby, cricket, hockey, and squash. Under his direction, the recreation grounds were increased by 150%. When Smith-Dorrien inquired about the feasibility of clearing a rather large tangled forest, his engineers told him it would take years to cut the thicket down. Undeterred, he waited until his two divisions were training in the vicinity of the forest. He placed them along its edge and, in his words, had them clear ". . . such a field of fire as would cause the disappearance of the obnoxious trees. All went according to plan, and in six hours the trees were down."<sup>10</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's most drastic reform in improving the living conditions of his men involved the soldiers patrolling Aldershot Town. Each night, numerous pickets, each composed of a sergeant and from four to six men, walked the streets, helping to keep the peace. Over 700 men were required every week for this "irksome duty." Smith-Dorrien wrote,

From long experience of the rank and file, who always play up if trusted, I abolished the picquets forthwith--at the same time publishing an order saying that I did so as I trusted the men to behave, but that if events proved I had formed too high an appreciation of the characteristics of the British soldier I should cancel the order.<sup>11</sup>

This act horrified his Provost-Marshal and many townspeople, who predicted immediate riot and ruin, for "Tommy's" penchant for "a feed five pints, and a fight" was legendary.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Smith-Dorrien broke with tradition when he permitted sergeants to wear civilian clothes when "walking out" if they desired.

To almost everyone's surprise, the plan was a huge and popular success. In December, 1908, a newspaper reported, "The abolition of the town patrol by the troops of the garrison has met with the approval of the troops themselves, which was to be expected, for it is an irksome duty, but also by the civilian element and the local authorities."<sup>13</sup> During the autumn maneuvers of the same year, even the most progressive reformers questioned Smith-Dorrien's sanity when he had the following order published:

The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, in view of the excellent discipline and good behaviour of the troops, places such confidence in their self-respect, and their esprit de corps, that he wishes to impose as few restrictions on them as possible. It is on this account that he has directed that the order prohibiting soldiers entering public-houses during manoeuvres to be held in abeyance. He wishes commanding officers to impress upon those under their command that this restriction is being removed because they are trusted to behave themselves, and not to indulge in excesses, and further warn them that, should this trust prove to be misplaced, not only will the offenders be most severely dealt with, but the restrictions will be reimposed at manoeuvres in future years.<sup>14</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's train of thought

. . . was that, even if out of bounds, a thirsty man would enter a public house, and knowing he could not do so often, for fear of the Military Police, would drink as much as he could in a short space of time, and probably get roaring drunk, whereas if there were no restrictions, and he could get his glass of beer whenever he liked, no evil effects would result.<sup>15</sup>

Newspaper headlines read, "The British Soldier is a Gentleman Says General Smith-Dorrien." There was a cartoon of G.O.C. chopping through piles of red tape while soldiers with halos drank toasts to his health.<sup>16</sup> His judgement was correct in that over 30,000 soldiers were in the field over a period of three weeks, and there was only one arrest for drunkenness and that one occurred in a regimental canteen located on post.<sup>17</sup>

In February, 1910, a periodical wrote:

The G.O.C. is blest with a very sanguine temperament in regard to human nature, and it has carried him through several matters where many otherwise determined leaders might possibly have never essayed a move. It was a bold step to do away with town piquets, and another to allow public-houses to remain 'in bounds' during manoeuvres. The fact that these privileges have not been seriously abused speaks well for the General having made a pretty close study of human nature, which students of military history are occasionally reminded is one of the most necessary attributes in a good military leader.<sup>18</sup>

But a close study of human nature will not alter it, and no army was ever totally comprised of "bun stranglers" who spent evenings reading the various religious tracts provided by the Army Scripture Reader. And, while a better class of recruits and tighter police enforcement caused many of the dance halls and public houses with "bedroom accommodations" to close, those soldiers desiring "other arrangements" could find them outside the city limits near Ash Vale. Here was a ". . . community of prostitutes in shanties and tents. There was an underworld of unlicensed vendors of cheap liquor, thieves, gamblers and the most disreputable types of gypsies."<sup>19</sup>

In all his attempts to upgrade the status of the soldier, Smith-Dorrien remained a realist. When he presided over the annual meeting of the Royal Army Temperance Association in March, 1909, he cautioned them, ". . . that by over-encouragement of Teetotalism they had created in the minds of those adopting it a Pharisaical impression that they were better than their fellows, resulting in their holding themselves aloof and creating cliques detrimental to the true spirit of comradeship which should exist in every unit." If that statement did not irritate his old friend from Staff College days who was the "prime mover" in

the organization, his next one did, and it also horrified his wife who was present. Smith-Dorrien went on, ". . . in my opinion Temperance, and not the Teetotalism, should be aimed at, though the latter was doubtless valuable to the weak-minded, who lacked self-control."<sup>20</sup>

But Smith-Dorrien did not limit himself to the privates and non-commissioned officers; he also took the officers to task, Colonel William Robertson, head of his General Staff and future Chief of the Imperial General Staff during the Great War, was a cavalry recruit at Aldershot in 1877. He remembered that in those days his officers ". . . showed no interest in his personal concerns, and sometimes did not even know his name." And though things had improved since then, Robertson wrote,

Much remained to be done and Smith-Dorrien was the man to do it. Full of energy himself, he expected everyone in the command to be equally zealous and to take his profession seriously. He held strongly that the utmost should be done for the welfare of the men and their families, and that they should be trusted not to abuse the increased privileges granted to them.<sup>21</sup>

As with the army in general, society also was changing its attitude about officers. Previously an officer was considered to be ". . . a brainless, swaggering, dissolute fellow who always tried to avoid paying his debts."<sup>22</sup> A career as an officer was becoming increasingly acceptable to middle-class professionals. Nevertheless there was a critical problem in obtaining new officers between the Boer War and World War I. By 1910, this shortage was so severe that for the first time in thirty-five years, the required entrance exams were waived for about 250 candidates entering Woolwich and Sandhurst.<sup>23</sup>



Primarily, the major drawback in officer recruitment was the lack of pay. Lord Roberts felt that better pay would ". . . enable those possessed of more brains than money to make a career . . . ." <sup>24</sup> In 1910, an infantry subaltern in a line regiment drew £96 a year, his captain £211, and the lieutenant-colonel earned £474. In a line cavalry regiment it was somewhat better--£122, £237, and £502 respectively. Clearly, this was inadequate, for a cavalry officer required from £600-700 more than his annual salary to maintain the standard expected of him. Initial expenses for clothing and equipment for the new infantry subaltern was approximately £200 and his brother officer in the cavalry needed from £600 to £1000 depending on how "smart" his regiment was. <sup>25</sup> Consequently, only those men from the upper and upper-middle class could afford to be referred to as His Majesties "Trusty and well-beloved" friends. "What cheaper or less troublesome way of running an empire could there be than a professional army whose officers all had private incomes and whose rank-and-file were all paupers." <sup>26</sup>

For the most part, many old attitudes were still present within the officer corps. Polo and hunting were considered the best training for good horsemanship and for developing a tactical feel for the country. Field-Marshal Viscount Montgomery remembers that as a junior officer in 1907, ". . . it was not fashionable to study war and we were not allowed to talk about our profession in the Officer's Mess." <sup>27</sup> An indicator of the officers' indifferent approach to their profession was that in the twelve years prior to World War I the German contributions to military literature amounted to about 50%, the French wrote about 25%, and

the English output was only 1%. Smith-Dorrien's position on officer education was quite clear. Six months before he took over at Aldershot, he formally opened the Indian Staff College at Quetta. He said, "Higher training nowadays Gentlemen, is a very serious matter. The whole education of armies is on a higher plane and therefore the brains of an army must be very highly developed indeed." To be an effective staff officer, he believed a man had to study foreign affairs and modern history so that his work would be done in the correct perspective. Very few senior officers felt that way.<sup>29</sup>

Despite Wellington's alleged remark that, "there is nothing on earth so stupid as a gallant officer,"<sup>30</sup> gallantry and gentlemanly conduct were the only two real character requirements for an officer.<sup>31</sup> Smith-Dorrien intended to add technical and tactical competence through realistic and meaningful training. He wanted every soldier at Aldershot to understand the reason behind his orders. Since his days at Quetta his motto always was:

It is only possible to get the best results out of troops if they are made to feel that they are trusted and encouraged to use their own intelligence and initiative, and that such is only possible in the field if the object in a Commander's mind and information as to developments are frequented circulated.<sup>32</sup>

Nobody ever doubted the object in Smith-Dorrien's mind, for it was frequently circulated. His ultimate goal was a properly trained, highly motivated army led by dedicated, professional officers and sergeants, and serviced by a highly efficient staff and supply system. Concurrent and complementary to his continuous efforts to upgrade the soldier and his environment was a training program designed to prepare the army for a modern war.

Less than three weeks after he took command Smith-Dorrien and Robertson were ". . . engaged in measuring the capacity and capabilities of his command and in preparing an instructional plan of campaign for the ensuing training season."<sup>33</sup> A famous general once told Robertson,

Never forget that we have two armies--The War Office army and the Aldershot army. The first is always up to strength, and is organized, reorganized, and disorganized almost daily. The second is never up to strength, knows nothing about the first and remains unaffected by any of these organizing activities. It just cleans its rifle and falls in on parade.<sup>34</sup>

Aldershot's new G.O.C. saw to it that the second army would soon be doing more than that. A portion of one of Smith-Dorrien's training instructions is worth quoting for it revealed his perceptions of future combat:

Modern war demands that the individual intelligence should be on a high plane. Battlefields now cover such extensive areas that control by officers is very difficult, consequently non-commissioned officers and even private soldiers very often find themselves left to their own resources: and it is only by being accustomed in peace training to use their common sense and intelligence that they are likely to be equal to their duties in war.<sup>35</sup>

If, during training exercises, the G.O.C. caught an officer or soldier who unnecessarily exposed himself to fire or observation, the unfortunate offender would be admonished ". . . in very downright terms . . . and it was not forgotten by those to whom it was addressed."<sup>36</sup>

Robertson wrote,

Having shared in much fighting in past wars, Smith-Dorrien was well qualified to judge the probable characteristics of future wars, and the importance he attached . . . to the right use of ground, the effect of rifle and machine-gun fire, and the necessity for carefully training section and other subordinate leaders proved, in the light of the Great War, that his appreciation was singularly accurate.<sup>37</sup>

But there was a deep chasm between an accurate appreciation and an army able to overcome the obstacles considered by the appreciation. Intelligent and realistic training was the only way to bridge the chasm. This training had to accept the radical changes in tactics and doctrine required by the tremendous advances in the technology of war, i.e., the machine gun, airplane, barbed wire, quick-firing artillery, mechanization, and wireless telegraphy.

Various training circulars, directives, and instructions competed for the little time left after the most elemental lessons in musketry and squad drill were taught. Unlimited (at least from the soldier's point of view) fatigues and "housekeeping" details also reduced training time. Coal had to be carted, rations drawn, grass picked off the drill field, and government property maintained. In order to make maximum use of what little time was left, the War Office established an annual training cycle that was broken down into four separate phases of increasingly complex training.

The most elementary period occurred between the last two weeks of September and the end of February. This was the time for "individual training." Any shortcomings revealed in the autumn maneuvers were corrected, and the majority of musketry practice and qualification took place. While the new recruits were under the tutelage of several old soldiers, the green subalterns were collected and a senior officer gave them ". . . small schemes with imaginary troops . . ." to work on. Each officer had five to ten minutes to complete his "appreciation of the situation" and hand it back to the instructor for a general discussion and critique.<sup>38</sup> This time of year was also the "trooping season"; all

unit change of stations, drafts for overseas replacements, and unit rotations to the colonies were scheduled for the winter. Also, all of the equipment used during the maneuvers had to be brought back to its previous pristine condition.

Furthermore, this was also the "furlough season," and large numbers of all ranks were absent. An individual training phase was a good idea, but its maximum effectiveness would only occur if the new recruits started the cycle at its beginning. This was not the case in the British army since recruits ". . . dribbled in all year. . . ."

Secondly, most regiments were understrength to begin with so two companies were often combined together for field exercises. This double-company system had a serious drawback in that neither the officers nor soldiers knew each other.<sup>39</sup> Smith-Dorrien's emphasis on "keeping your men informed" must have had some impact for as one observer noted in the spring of 1908, "the winter training has been regarded more agreeable also by reason of the fact that the soldier has been taken into the confidence of his superiors and informed on the why and wherefore of everything."<sup>40</sup>

Starting in March and lasting until the end of April was the phase of "collective training" allocated to company, battery, and squadron commanders to train their men to work as a team. Part of this phase was a program adopted by Sir John French and continued by Smith-Dorrien called "On Your Own" training. Under this program, the commander of a double-company had to take his unit at least sixteen miles away from Aldershot and train his men there for five days. A company commander had complete freedom and was totally responsible for transportation,

messing, and billeting of the men. He received £50 to cover these expenses. This was to have a ". . . broadening effect on their mental horizon, besides quickening facilities in administrative directions hitherto blunted by absence of motive."<sup>41</sup> This was a popular scheme with both officers and troops for it provided a pleasant break from normal routine, new scenery, and snug barns for shelter instead of leaky, cold tents for the weather in Hampshire at this season was truly miserable. An additional benefit to the program was that the "common citizen" obtained a first-hand impression of the soldier which helped to eliminate fears and misconceptions common during the earlier times of press gangs and forced billeting. Part of this appreciation was probably due to the £50 spent on the local economy.

May and June belonged to battalion commanders, and the exercises became more complex as the men practised tactical operations on a larger scale. This phase of "collective training," and the next one in July and August for brigade and division commanders, provided more training to the officers than it did to the men. Reports of the previous year's maneuvers were dusted off, and weak points were addressed. All of this led up to the final culmination--the Annual or Autumn or Army Maneuvers which usually took place in late September after all the crops were in so that the claims from local landowners for "maneuver damage" would be minimal. Upon the conclusion of the maneuvers and when the last unit dragged into Aldershot and the men flopped onto their cots, the entire cycle would begin again. Meanwhile the War Office was studying all the reports, marking areas that needed additional work, and preparing the training instructions to the combat arms for the next year. The purpose

of the training cycle and army-wide instructions was to provide a basis for uniform training where theoretically every unit would be at the same combat capacity.

Surprisingly, these formalizations of training doctrine at the War Office level were a recent development. Field-Marshal Sir Garnet Wolseley's Soldier's Pocket Book first appeared in 1869. It was updated over the years but it remained unofficial. In 1906, the War Office published 100 copies of an experimental Field Service Pocket Book. In the next year they enlarged it from 166 pages to 190 pages, and it was printed as the Field Service Pocket Book 1907, (Provisional). In 1908, it was expanded to 204 pages and renamed the Field Service Book, 1908. Finally, in 1909, the Field Service Regulations, Part I - Operations - 1909 was issued and it presented no real surprises. But the Part II - Administration, however, upset the Adjutant-General and the Quarter-master-General.<sup>42</sup>

For the most part these training regulations and instructions were sound, but in several areas they flirted with false doctrine, especially where technology had any influence. On the question of entrenchment, a concept that ancient warriors appreciated, there seemed to be a near universal opinion that it was a bad habit. "Materially and morally, protection is best obtained by the most vigorous action. To dig oneself in diminishes the intensity of one's fire and depresses the offensive spirit."<sup>43</sup> If regulars were taught to use the spade it would create ". . . a defensive-minded mentality which would sap them of their morale, deprive them of their spirit of aggression . . . and render them incapable of manoeuvring courageously and competently . . . ." <sup>44</sup>

No officer, including Smith-Dorrien, foresaw the extent of the trench warfare just a few years ahead, but neither did Smith-Dorrien accept the ideas expressed above. He knew that entrenching to some degree was a necessity for survival against modern rifles and machine guns, especially if the natural terrain provided little cover. Smith-Dorrien ordered that the

. . . troops should be continually practised in improvising existing cover . . . . Officers and non-commissioned officers should be trained to sight and trace trenches after dark as well as by day. Artillery, too, is very dependent on the hours of darkness in getting into position, and although it may as a rule be possible to select positions during the day, it must frequently happen that the actual digging in of gun pits, and moving guns into them must take place at night.<sup>45</sup>

Before he left, his two divisions knew how to dig trenches. Smith-Dorrien may even have convinced them of its value, for in February, 1909, the Aldershot column in the Naval and Military Record reported that trenching ". . . was regarded as a sort of hang-dog fatigue work loses its horrors, and maybe cross-country racing and even football will yet give away to it in popularity as a competition! But not yet!"<sup>46</sup>

Smith-Dorrien also convinced the War Office to discard the current entrenching tool--the Wallace spade which was a "positive torment,"--and to adopt a new design which every man (including sergeants) was to carry, as opposed to every other private.<sup>47</sup> From the soldiers' experiences, the best idea was to discard all entrenching tools.

Another project of Sir Horace's was upgrading the army's machine gun. He wanted the improved Vickers model to replace the ancient Maxim but could not convince the War Office to finance the project.<sup>48</sup> He went to the School of Musketry at Hythe to learn all about machine guns



and how to best employ them but machine gun doctrine was yet to be established. Some felt it should be treated as artillery. Smith-Dorrien was not convinced that was correct. He felt that each battalion should control the two weapons allotted to them unless there was a special situation such as a critical assault or an exposed position that required the weapons to be "brigaded" at the crucial point. Over the years of his command, he had his subordinates experiment with various tactical applications of the fire power provided by the machine gun; he kept his mind open.<sup>49</sup>

Sir Horace also paid particular attention to a more traditional weapon--the rifle. Britain's Lee-Enfield was perhaps the finest rifle in the world.<sup>50</sup> While nearly every general talked about improving marksmanship, Smith-Dorrien was one of the few who actually accomplished it. Because of the War Office's legendary parsimony, it was a wonder that the men even remembered how to fire their weapons. Each year, the infantry and the cavalry were allocated 250 rounds per man, engineers received 100 and the artillerymen fired forty. Those soldiers attending the machine gun course at Hythe received a paltry 310 rounds, and those who the instructors judged as proficient did not fire any, thereby saving the ammunition.<sup>51</sup> Most of the allocation was fired at the annual qualification course, and the trooper went to the ranges ". . . in the same spirit as the convicts on the treadmill."<sup>52</sup>

Recruits were given eight days of preliminary practice or "dry firing," and then they went to the range and fired sixteen cycles of seven rounds each at ranges from 200 to 800 yards in various positions (standing, kneeling, and prone). Next were four "rapid" individual

practices, and seven attempts at volley firing. Total allowed--189 rounds, and poor shots had eleven additional bullets to make them experts.

Refresher training consisted of eight "dry" drills during the year on aiming and fire discipline and eight tries at distance judging. Just prior to the "live firing" on Ash Range, there were two additional days of "preliminary drill." On the range each soldier had forty-two rounds allotted for "deliberate individual" at ranges of 200-800 yards; fifty-six rounds were to be fired as "volley and independent," and twenty rounds were allotted to "attack practice." A commander had another eighty-one rounds per man to fire in any area of his choice.<sup>53</sup>

Targets were of the "bull's eye" variety and posted at known ranges. This was patently unrealistic, and in September, 1908, Sir Horace spoke about musketry and summarized his opinions: "First, that the old bull's eye shooting was unnecessary to make men serviceable; secondly more practice was required in loading the rifle for quick firing and to get the best results; and thirdly, judging distance must not be lost sight of, for under service conditions it was impossible to hit without practice in judging distance." He wanted commanders to use the time during inclement weather in the winter when the troopers were forced to stay indoors to practice snap shooting, quick loading, aiming, and firing behind cover.<sup>54</sup> Competition was used as an incentive for soldiers to improve their firing skills and each unit had a champion.

King of all marksmanship contests was the Annual Rifle Association Meeting which usually had over 11,000 applicants competing for prizes worth £1,250 (usually silver spoons). With Smith-Dorrien's support, the bull's eye was dropped from this contest and the new service target

was introduced. This target's upper portion was white to represent the sky, and the lower part was "dull mud-coloured." A black pattern in the shape of a man's head and shoulders was in the brown portion, with the "head" partly into the white. Any shots in the black were scored as bull'eyes and those in the brown were "hits."<sup>55</sup> Smith-Dorrien made his range present as realistic targets as possible. It had features that the U.S. Army in 1979 did not process. It contained ". . . every sort of appearing and disappearing targets, such as infantry digging a trench, guns galloping into action, cavalry charging towards the attacker. . . ." These targets were set up on a small gauge railway which operators ran from behind a protective mound. Sir Horace made this range part of the annual course, and he presented a challenge cup to the winning team.<sup>56</sup>

To encourage practice in judging distance, Smith-Dorrien established a contest. Teams of twelve, four each of officers, N.C.O.'s, and privates, observed scouts firing blanks. Officers were permitted to use field glasses for the maximum range was 2000 yards, and the other ranks used the naked eye up to 1200 yards. Each team was allowed two minutes to find the enemy, judge the distance, and set their sights on their rifles. For a correct range, a team received four points, and each fifty yard error was a loss of one point. In August, 1908, the Gordon Highlanders won first place, the prize cup, and £12 with a score of 124 points.<sup>57</sup>

Upon reviewing the musketry returns for his command, Smith-Dorrien wrote:

I was therefore, not at all pleased to find that the Cavalry Brigade at Aldershot were low down in the annual musketry courses. . . . So on 21st August, 1909, ordering all cavalry

officers to meet me at the 16th Lancer's Mess, I gave them my views pretty clearly, with the result that . . . the improvement in musketry was so marked that the cavalry went nearly to the head of the lists in the Annual Musketry. I submit that my action was justified by what happened in the Great War, but at the time I am aware that my attitude was resented.<sup>58</sup>

Improper doctrine and tactics would negate any marksmanship skill Smith-Dorrien introduced. Authorities were divided on the proper battlefield procedures to follow. Conclusions from the French and German maneuvers conflicted with their own doctrine. "Attack, attack, always attack," seemed to be the majority view. Statements like, "We must harden our hearts, as our forefathers of old, to the heavy losses that will occur . . . a steady advance of strong disciplined and brave men, prepared to suffer losses, to use their bayonets with effect . . ." were common.<sup>59</sup> Some generals wanted to attack from a position 600 yards from the objective.<sup>60</sup> Others, probably mindful of the weight of the soldier's kit and his chance of surviving a 600 yard assault against machine guns, artillery, and a protected and determined foe, opted for a more conservative 200 yard charge.<sup>61</sup>

Official experts in the War Office (Director of Staff Studies) gave little help. Uncertain whether French, German, or home-grown doctrine provided the true path to victory, they toyed with "the doctrine of no doctrine." The Memorandum on Army Training, 1910 was rather vague and illustrated this doctrine of no doctrine: "Success depends not so much on the inherent soundness of a principle or plan of operations as on the method of application of the principle and the resolution with which the plan is carried out,"--an example of fence straddling at its finest.<sup>62</sup>

Not all generals were as foggy-headed. Major-General Charles Monro advocated an assault at the "quick time" until enemy fire forced your forces to advance by alternate sections. If the enemy's fire became more effective, the line would continue to advance by individual rushes. At all times, those soldiers not moving were to keep a covering fire for those advancing.<sup>63</sup> Smith-Dorrien felt that the established extension for the assaulting line was adequate but wanted the forward sections to wait for the following lines to reach the last firing position before the final assault, as opposed to piecemeal attempts by successive lines.<sup>64</sup>

Discussions of battlefield maneuvers were not limited to the infantry. There grew, from an analysis of recent tactical operations, an awareness of the importance of a true combined arms team, i.e. a close and continuous cooperation between the cavalry, the infantry, and the artillery. This cooperation was absolutely imperative between the latter two arms.

Actually, the mission of the artillery had changed very little over the decades. On the offence, it was to shell the objective, reduce the enemy, and weaken his resistance. On the defence, it was to inflict as much damage as possible before the enemy approached within small-arms range.<sup>65</sup> Impressive technical advancements in the quick-firing gun and smokeless powder, lessons of the Russo-Japanese War, and the extensive French artillery tests and maneuvers contributed to the general tactical confusion on how to maximize the potential of the artillery.

Smith-Dorrien's only contribution to preparing the artillery for the next war was to insist that the batteries fire from concealed positions and that they were to be dug-in whenever possible. He understood the jealousies and the parochial opinions of each branch. In order to foster understanding between the two arms, artillery officers exchanged positions with their brother infantry officers for short periods of time. On exercises, he insisted that each unit fully understand their mission in relation to the overall scheme and how they each complement the other.

Lord Roberts, a gunner of the old school, was the only officer at the highest echelons who believed that artillery had become the decisive force on the battlefield, but his was definitely a minority opinion.<sup>66</sup> Many artillery officers still dreamed of unlimbering from the charge at point blank range and shredding the enemy into ruins with several crashing volleys.

Despite their discussions of bayonet charges and their longing for the chance to fire double-grape at fifty yards, nothing infantrymen or artillerymen debated ever reached the furor and bitterness of the "cavalry controversy" concerning mounted tactics. Cavalry regiments in general, and cavalry officers in particular, were very jealous of their special position as the distilled essence of chivalry and gallantry. No other British uniform could compete with that of the cavalry in its martial splendor and its ability to catch a lady's eye. Pennant-tipped lances, the jingle of sabres and saddle rings, and the earthy aroma of horse sweat and saddlesoap were far more romantic than hob-nailed ammunition boots, an eight-pound rifle, and dull khaki.

Cavalry knew deep in their haughty souls, that as the true descendants of the knights of King Arthur's Round table, they were indeed the keepers of the flame. The bugle call that sounded the charge of the Light Brigade was identical to the one heard by the 17th Lancers of Omdurman in 1898. In his dreams, each eager young subaltern heard echoes of those bugles as he reaped his harvest of glory in bloody battles on future fields of valor. Elite of the elite was, and is, the Household Cavalry. Members of this unit believed that they were far superior to the troopers in the line regiments, who in turn, despised the Household cavalrymen for being too soft. Dragoon Guardsmen thought that they were far superior to mere Dragoon, and both thought it a horrible disgrace to be a Lancer. And none of the three would consider service as a Hussar. At the same time, a Hussar knew that all the others were too big and bulky and that he was the only true cavalryman. Despite their differences, however, all cavalrymen pitied the poor "beetle crunchers"--the infantry.<sup>67</sup> But the more learned soldiers in the infantry knew a poem by Lindsay Gordon which read in part:

So the coward will dare on a gallant horse  
     What he never would dare alone  
 Because he exults in a borrowed force  
     And a hardihood not his own.<sup>68</sup>

Roots of the cavalry controversy were found in the spirited arguments over whether the lance or sword was the most efficient weapon. It was easier to reach dismounted men with the lance, but it took over three years of practise before a trooper was really competent in its use. Although the sword was easier to master, it also had several disadvantages; it was bulky, heavy, and after several swings most men's

wrists and arms were too fatigued for them to be very effective.<sup>69</sup> But there was not any real problem since both weapons were used astride a noble steed and not afoot like ignoble infantry.

It took the introduction of a rapid fire rifle to accelerate the debate and split the cavalry corps. Some modern, professional officers started to study the relationships between fire power and shock action. Historical examples were trotted forth to prove or disprove the advantages of sword or lance or rifle. America's Civil War was rated as a draw--both firepower and dismounted action were employed as well as the more traditional shock action of a massed cavalry charge. It was believed that more shock action was used in the Franco-Prussian war than fire power, and both sides claimed the Boer War vindicated their positions.<sup>70</sup> In May, 1900, there was an action near the Zand River where the cavalry half-heartedly pursued the withdrawing Boers. Major-General Sir Ian Hamilton described the cavalry's action as a "fiasco," where as Major-General Sir John French thought it was a ". . . splendid triumph for the moral force of cold steel."<sup>71</sup>

Most anti-cavalry reformers felt the Boer War was atypical and therefore did not prove anything. These officers were disgusted with the use of mounted infantry and argued that these impromptu units were worthless. Major Douglas Haig, a cavalry officer and a future commander of the British Army in France, wrote that mounted infantry ". . . can't ride and know nothing about their duties as mounted men. Robert's Horse and Kitchener's Horse are only good for looting, and the greater part of them disappear the moment a shot is fired or there is a prospect of a fight."<sup>72</sup> Lord Kitchener wrote to Lord Roberts, (they shared the



same opinion about cavalry), that the beau sabres should ". . . seize and hold positions by rifle fire and therefore assist the general scheme . . . instead of wondering sometimes aimlessly, seeking for the enemy's cavalry in order to charge them as their only role in war."<sup>73</sup> There were other suggestions; one cavalry tactitian wanted the cavalry to have more machine guns for firepower, let the troopers keep their swords, and issue revolvers instead of rifles. Another attempt at compromise was an idea to have a sword attached to the end of the rifle, thereby creating a lance. It did not work because of poor balance and thrusting power.<sup>74</sup> Lord Roberts, a crusty campaigner if there ever was one, fired twenty-one senior officers, including eleven of the seventeen cavalry leaders, for incompetence during the first eleven months in the Boer War. This added to his reputation as a cavalry reformer.<sup>75</sup> As Commander-in-Chief of the British Army, he pushed his views on the cavalry and in an Army Order in 1903 made it official:

" . . . It [the lance] will only be carried on escort duty, at reviews and at other ceremonial parades; not on guard, in the field, at manoeuvres, or on active service." Roberts wanted no room for doubt in the last paragraph, "In issuing these instructions, the Commander-in-Chief desires to impress upon all ranks that although the cavalry are armed with the carbine (or rifle) and sword, the carbine (or rifle) will henceforth be considered as the Cavalry soldier's principal weapon."<sup>76</sup> This instruction sat as well on the cavalry's self-image as a commissariat mule's pack saddle did on the colonel's favorite polo pony.

Battle lines were drawn on this issue, and the overwhelming majority were behind the purists led by Lieutenant-General Sir John French,

Major-General Sir Douglas Haig, Brigadier-General M.F. Rimmington and Major-General H.J. Scobell. A small handful of reformers collected around Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, Smith-Dorrien, Sir Ian Hamilton and the Earl of Dundonald--the only cavalry officer was the Earl.<sup>77</sup>

In 1906, the lance was dropped from escort duty and ceremonial parades; victory seemed complete for the reformers. However, Roberts' opponents bided their time and kept up steady pressure from all sides. Cavalry Training 1907, a War Office publication sponsored by Major-General Sir Douglas Haig, demonstrated the nature of their resistance.

It must be accepted as principle that the rifle, effective as it is, cannot replace the effect produced by the speed of the horse, the magnetism of the charge and the terror of cold steel. For when opportunities for mounted action occur, these characteristics combine to inspire dash, enthusiasm and moral ascendancy that cavalry is rendered irresistible.<sup>78</sup>

Now the conflict was in official doctrine. Roberts and his supporters intended to couple firepower with the inherent capability of the cavalry's mobility. They wanted the cavalry to use their rifles to create a situation that could be exploited by shock action and swords. Scouting, screening and threatening the enemy's flanks and rear had priority over all else.<sup>79</sup> "True" cavalry officers viewed anything other than a "charge a la Scot's Grays at Waterloo" as blasphemy and attempts at reform as doctrinal emasculation.

While Roberts won the opening round by eliminating the lance, his opponents counter attacked and convinced the War Office to appoint a committee to develop a better sword. Chairman of this committee was Sir John French, who was assisted by none other than Haig, Rimmington, Scobell and a champion swordsman, Captain A. Hutton.<sup>80</sup>

Their design was issued in 1908, and was based on the more effective thrust than on the more instinctive method of "slash and hack." However, the steel scabbard was continued instead of a leather-covered wooden one. Besides being shiny and noisy, the steel sheath dulled the blade very quickly, although some quality steel scabbards did have a wooden lining.

Personalities soon became involved in the dispute. Cavalrymen refused to yield their cherished charges to grubby dismounted action and labelled the reformers as anti-cavalry. When Roberts was eased out of office in 1904, his party's power waned as French's waxed.

Ian Hamilton was probably the most hard-line reformer. As an observer to the Russo-Japanese War, he sent a dispatch home on the Battle of Liao Yang concerning the use of cavalry, in which he observed that ". . . the only thing the cavalry could do in the face of machine guns was to cook rice for their own infantry . . . ." Later he wrote, "For my part I maintain it would be more reasonable to introduce the elephants of Porus on to a modern battlefield as regiments of lancers and dragoons . . . ." <sup>81</sup> French felt ". . . that dismounted action would tend to take the edge off their cavalry's dash . . .", supported massed charges, and believed that the sword and not the rifle was the true weapon of the cavalry. <sup>82</sup> Furthermore, he thought that the cavalry could spring upon the enemy before they could bring their weapons to bear and thus allowing the horsemen to destroy them with the sword. <sup>83</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's views generally followed those of the other reformers; he wanted the cavalry for bold, fast reconnaissance, tenacious screening operations, and wide turning movements. When his

troopers made contact with the enemy, however, they were to dismount and use their Enfields. After two years at Aldershot, Sir Horace was irritated to find that the cavalry ". . . on field days and manoeuvres, hardly ever dismounted, but delivered perfectly carried out, though impossible, knee-to-knee charges against infantry."<sup>84</sup> This glaring failure to face reality was also part of his musketry lecture to the assembled cavalry officers at the 17th Lancer's Mess in August, 1909. It was a typical British understatement when he wrote that he gave them his views pretty clearly and that he was aware that his attitude was resented. In actuality, Sir Horace had a truly spectacular temper, and most of the old line cavalry officers were close to mutiny afterwards. There was little they could do however besides have the last word--"Yes Sir!"

Smith-Dorrien's newest plans to "wreck" the cavalry soon found their way back to Sir John French who added them to his growing list of scores to even up. And by 1909, the list on Smith-Dorrien must have filled several pages. Hardly was the ink dry on Sir John's very cordial letter of welcome than he began to marshal his forces against Smith-Dorrien.

French's "progressive" tactics were threatened by Sir Horace's "irresponsible" ideas about dismounted action, trenches, and marksmanship. Smith-Dorrien had hardly unpacked when in January, 1908, just one month after he assumed command, he was invited to a dinner--a very special dinner. Rumors were whispered in War Office corridors that Sir Horace had "aged prematurely" and was not fit to command. Also, French had complained to Haldane about Sir Horace's dangerous activities.

As a consequence, this dinner at the Carleton was arranged. Smith-Dorrien was on trial--but he did not know it. French, and Sir Frederick Maurice were present, and Lord Esher (author of the Esher Report) was to be Sir Horace's informal judge. Esher left his impression of the meal in his journal: "The dinner was given in order to see whether Smith-Dorrien had changed and weakened as some maintained. He spoke very well on Indian subjects, and seemed a very reasonable, clear-headed man."<sup>85</sup> Smith-Dorrien was exonerated, and the secret trial was over.

On May 18, 1908, King Edward VII, Queen Alexandria, and the Prince and Princess of Wales arrived to observe a field day and watched a well-executed, modern, tactical exercise that was marred at the very end by a cavalry charge against dug-in infantry. Smith-Dorrien denounced the charge as "light brigade" tactics and the King agreed with him. Sir John, in attendance to the Royal Party, took the criticism as a personal insult and a public affront. Nor was his ego soothed when The Illustrated London News called the exercise ". . . the most realistic sham fight that has ever been organized . . . ." <sup>86</sup> Thus the seeds of animosity were planted by Sir John--seeds whose insidious tendrils bore for Smith-Dorrien a tragic fruit which ended his active career seven years later.

French made no effort to conceal his displeasure with Sir Horace. Sir John demonstrated this by the fact that he never voluntarily visited Aldershot again as long as Smith-Dorrien was the G.O.C.<sup>87</sup> If that illustrated a certain childish petulance, French also showed a streak of cowardice and vindictiveness by ruining the careers of innocent

officers to strike back at Smith-Dorrien. As commander of Aldershot, Sir Horace was a member of the promotion board for officers up to major-general. Since Sir John was the president, any nomination put forth by Smith-Dorrien received French's veto and the kiss of death for the officer's career. When other board members warned Sir Horace that French was doing this, it was a testimony to Smith-Dorrien's integrity that he did not believe it, because no British officer could do such a thing. Unfortunately for some officers, Sir John could and did. Sir Horace kept on submitting names to French instead of having another member do it for him.<sup>88</sup>

While Sir Horace led his cavalry to the water trough of battle-field reality and made them begrudgingly drink from it, the purists had consolidated their power. Haig, after one year as Director of Military Training (1906) stepped into the position that established tactical doctrine--The Director of Staff Duties. He held this crucial post from 1907-1909 before accepting the position of Chief of Staff of the Indian Army. Sir John French was the Inspector General of the Forces until he replaced Field-Marshal Lord Nicholson as Chief of the Imperial General Staff. So, with several influential posts securely in the hands of traditionalists, they began to erode the reforms thus far accomplished. In June, 1909, the lance was restored for use ". . . not only on escort duty and at reviews . . . but also on guard duty, during training, at manoeuvres, and when so ordered on field service."<sup>89</sup>

In reviewing cavalry training in 1910, the Army Council gave high marks for the cavalry's reconnaissance skills but admonished that, ". . . there is a lack of cohesion in the charge, and the squadron opens

out instead of closing in . . . . Lances and swords are not brought to the 'engage' with their points ready for the thrust . . . the tendency to extend the front unduly, the lack of depth in attack formations, and the want of driving power of the decisive point have been again noticeable this year."<sup>90</sup> In 1910, musketry and reconnaissance each comprised ten percent of the cavalry's training. Colonel H. De Lisle, a renegade cavalryman, thought that reconnaissance required forty percent and that the other two areas should divide the remaining time equally.<sup>91</sup>

There was never enough time for all the training that all the officers in the chain of command wanted. Each commander led a personal crusade for some aspect of training. To counter this encroachment on available time, many company level leaders often posted sentinels to warn of approaching high ranking visitors who came to "have a look about." One miserable captain had the brigadier on the General Staff, the Division Commander, the colonel on the General Staff, his brigadier, and his own colonel inspect his unit's activities. Everyone but his own commander provided him with "valuable advice" on how to train the soldier.<sup>92</sup> Smith-Dorrien understood the inverse relationship between available time and one's position in any organizational hierarchy. He reminded his subordinates that, ". . . the time available for squadron, battery and company collective training is, for several unavoidable reasons, sufficiently limited already, and generals and C.O.'s [Commanding Officer's] should insure that it is not further restricted . . . ." <sup>93</sup>

In addition to being conscious of the limited time available for training, he insured that the time was used wisely toward the goal of realism. Little escaped Sir Horace's scrutiny. For example, many units

road-marched to various training areas from barracks and camps and back again. It was common for these columns to put out flank guards to accustom the men to being conscious of march security. Smith-Dorrien stopped this apparently reasonable practise. Since there were not any soldiers acting as the enemy, the flank guards just ambled along. This, he felt, encouraged bad habits and was worse than not having the guards out at all. Guards were to be employed only if there was a real threat from some type of "enemy" to keep the security alert.<sup>94</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's various staff positions enabled him to review the army as a complete entity and not just as the sum of its component parts--parts he knew extraordinarily well. He understood the subtle and the not-so-subtle relationships and quickly spotted any potential weaknesses. An example of this involved medical personnel. On most exercises and maneuvers,<sup>95</sup> medical orderlies were provided to handle anticipated casualties from heat exhaustion, sickness, etc. Therefore, the evacuation and hospitalization procedures were never tested for realistic numbers of casualties expected in combat. Additionally, Smith-Dorrien was the first one to have senior members of the Royal Army Medical Corps participate on the staff rides so that they would be more aware of the overall plan and have the opportunity to provide input into decisions affecting their envisioned operations.<sup>96</sup>

Yet another illustration involved officer education. In March, 1911, he organized an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Course for officers which was hailed as ". . . another instance of the far sightedness of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien."<sup>97</sup> He encouraged his officers in their professional studies and was a strong supporter of the Aldershot Military Society,



an organization of officers who sponsored lectures on various aspects of their profession.<sup>98</sup> For the winter of 1911/12, he ordered that the Russo-Japanese War be studied by the officers for clues about the conditions of the next war.<sup>99</sup>

All of this emphasis on preparation for the next war had an adverse effect on the more traditional drill-field skills. It was noticed that for the King's Birthday Parade on May 27, 1911, the lines were not properly dressed and some units broke step when the band changed music. But the guess was that Smith-Dorrien ". . . would rather see smart work in the field than faultless parades and slackness in practical soldiering . . . ."100

In reality, war was the only real test of an army's training practices, doctrine, and tactics. Most military organizations changed as the result of poor performance in a previous war. Any corrections to existing procedures were inspired from that fount of genius--hindsight. It was a case of a reaction to a situation instead of the far more difficult process of anticipation. Rarely did nations arrange wars to test their battle preparedness. Instead maneuvers were used as a substitute.

Maneuvers have been used by commanders ". . . to practise in peace what they would never attempt in war." Were maneuvers a ". . . near image of war without its guilt," or a "burlesque of battle enshrined with guilt. . ."?101 All too often the latter description was uncomfortably accurate.

England first held modern annual maneuvers in 1872. Previously, field days were organized, but they were really large ceremonies.

Annual maneuvers in the 1880's and 90's were valuable to the commanders and their primitive staffs, but the soldiers received little practical instruction. All that the troopers did, recalled one private was to ". . . march, put up tents, pull down tents, clean equipment and go hungry."<sup>102</sup> Cease-fire sounded at dusk, and "enemy" officers were entertained at their opponents' mess. Occasionally, "the troops had become so keen that some very realistic scenes occurred before the '100 yard order' was issued."<sup>103</sup> This order forbade soldiers from opposing sides to approach within 100 yards of each other. Presumably this was to keep the men out of rifle butt, entrenching tool, and rock throwing range.

After the Boer War, the autumn maneuvers strove for more realism. One of the major artificial constraints that would never be solved was the lack of available ground--new areas, where every road, path, hill and thicket was not known by heart. Once an area was tentatively selected every owner, tenant, and sub-tenant had to be contacted and their approval to use their land was obtained. To do this required months of correspondence with hundreds of people and many personal interviews, and yet the land owner would change his mind at the last moment. Often there were restrictions on the use of the land. Any area declared a "garden" or "pleasure ground" was off-limits. Frequently, these places were of tactical importance and thereby created ludicrous situations. Often a force that was advancing "on-line" would have to move into a column and march down a road that ran through a posted area.<sup>104</sup>

After an area had been negotiated, the Manoeuvres Act of 1897 provided that a Manoeuvres Commission would be appointed by the Councils of the Counties and boroughs involved. It was the commission's job to work with the military in the selection of road's, campsites and water sources. Next, compensation officers were selected and posters were distributed, warning animal owners to keep their stock penned up. Finally, a staff ride was conducted in the area so that preliminary plans could be made prior to the arrival of any troops.<sup>105</sup>

Naturally there were claims for damage done by the soldiers; many were just, others were not. One man wanted one day's wages for his two farm hands. When questioned about the military's responsibility, he replied that his men had stopped work to visit with the soldiers.<sup>106</sup>

Civilians on a holiday and out to watch the great battles often interfered with operations. A piece of advice was that if you ". . . should become aware of straw hats and tailormade skirts converging mysteriously towards any given point in motor cars or Raleigh carts . . . to follow them . . . for they, the daughters of the great, have had 'the tip' and will lead you to the scene of the death-ride of many horse-men."<sup>107</sup>

All of the foregoing problems were insignificant when compared with the eternal problem of determining who won a particular engagement, how many casualties each side received, and what should the appropriate results be. Obviously, if the soldiers fired live ammunition, it would be easy to tell who won. Since that option was beyond serious consideration, the only feasible solution involved the employment of umpires. Umpiring, thus, became a pivotal factor in the success of a

maneuver. If the umpiring was good then the manoeuvres were good. Poor umpiring was disastrous. Colonel G.T. Forestier-Walker, who was the army's umpire expert, spoke to the officers at Aldershot in 1911: "I have never heard that position of an umpire is considered to be one of dignity or emolument." He divided umpires into three categories according to their motives for accepting the assignment:

- a. Because they were ordered to, and couldn't wriggle out of it.
- b. Some members of a certain branch of the service have a constitutional objection to footslogging.
- c. Because, disagreeable as the duty might be, the momentary relation of some of them with their own commanding officer rendered a temporary separation almost necessary and at any rate, extremely advisable, and when such separation was combined with a possibility of getting a bit of their own back in the way of decisions, the path of duty appeared to be clearly pointed out.<sup>108</sup>

Prior to 1909, the umpires actually ran the maneuvers. They directed the forces on the field by their decisions and left the commander with very little initiative. For the 1909 maneuvers new instructions were issued. Each company had four yellow casualty screens or flags. If the umpire directed that one screen be raised, it signified to the commander that he was receiving casualties and that his ". . . pace must be checked . . . ." Increasingly effective fire was signalled by raising the second and third screen. When all four were displayed, the commander had to make some improvement in the situation or lose his entire force.

These screens were not to be regarded ". . . as a sort of company colour, to be bourne as rapidly as possible into the heart of the enemy."<sup>109</sup>

Between, his own casualty screens and those displayed by his opponent and supplemented by "word pictures" from the umpire which described the situation, the commander, theoretically, had enough information on which to base a tactical decision. These "word pictures" were very important. Forestier-Walker found that phrases like, "You are under heavy fire" were inadequate. These descriptions had to be detailed and specific and yet not surrender facts about the enemy that he would not normally have in a real battle. Forestier-Walker noted in his instructions to umpires that ". . . you will find that, with a little practice . . . you can draw the most lurid and appalling pictures of carnage. . . ."<sup>110</sup> His advice was to make a decision and stick to it. It was permissible for an umpire to give his rationale only if it would not betray the other side. Naturally, there would be an argument, but Forestier-Walker believed it desirable to ". . . let the most junior argue if they want to, for you have to let the senior ones argue whether you want to or not."

In conclusion, don't expect that your decision will fill everybody with delight. From longish experience, I am inclined to think that there are only two occasions on which you are entitled to infer from the demeanor of the combatants that your decision has been a right one. One of these occasions is when neither side is pleased with the decision. You may safely conclude that when this occurs fairly often, you are doing rather well. The other occasion is when both sides express approval of the decision. I have never yet met this case.<sup>111</sup>

For the 1908 maneuvers, all the forces were from Aldershot. During the first phase (15-18 September), Major-General James M. Grierson's 1st

Division acted as the invaders or Red Force and the 2nd Division under Major-General T.E. Stephenson was the Blue Force--the defenders of England's sacred soil. Smith-Dorrien was the Director and Chief Umpire.

On the first day of operations (Tuesday, September 16), the advance cavalry reconnaissance of both sides probed for their opponent's positions. During the night, the 2nd South Lancashires, a blue regiment, surprised the Cavalry Brigade under Colonel H. de la Gough who were fast asleep and captured the entire unit. Uncertain of what to do next, the umpire on the scene contacted Sir Horace who said it was quite clear--the cavalry brigade was considered to be out of action. The elation of the 2nd South Lancashire was only surpassed by the humiliation of the cavalry.

Rain added realism on the second day. Grierson moved his invaders northwards and outmarched the blue soldiers to a key ridge. Stephenson spent the remainder of the afternoon in piecemeal attacks trying to dislodge him. Since the umpires could not decide what to do or which side won, Smith-Dorrien directed both sides to disengage, move back, and spend the night in administrative bivouac.

To prevent the same indecisive struggle from occurring again, Stephenson was told that he would receive another division as reinforcements and he was to withdraw to a better position and await them. Grierson's orders were to continue his advance north-east. Parity of strength prevented either side from winning any advantage. Thus ended the first phase.

Grierson's men now became the imaginary division that was to reinforce Stephenson. Smith-Dorrien assumed control of this new two-division

force. Colonel Julian Byng and a skeleton force assumed the role of the red units. Colonel Julian Byng broke contact and moved to a better defensive position. On the afternoon of the 18th, Smith-Dorrien's cavalry patrols found Byng and seized several bridges over a river that Byng used as a barrier. Byng's position on a high, wooded ridge was formidable. Sir Horace gave orders that his men would make a night march so they could be in position to assault at dawn. It was raining, the troops had little rest, and the officers lacked time for a full reconnaissance. Maneuverwise press correspondents were doubtful that it could be done. A night march in the rain over unfamiliar ground ". . . can only be achieved by exceptionally well trained troops."<sup>112</sup> Smith-Dorrien, however, was confident that his men could do it, and he was not disappointed. Press reports of the night march and dawn assault were very laudatory; one noted, "The admitted success of the manoeuvres must be highly gratifying to Sir H.L. Smith-Dorrien . . . the troops at Aldershot have received a systematic and progressive training, the results of which greatly impressed all who had the pleasure of seeing them."<sup>113</sup>

Despite the good reviews, the maneuvers were not flawless. There were some problems in march discipline. Also, since each artillery piece soon fired its allotted forty rounds of blank ammunition, many unit leaders were upset when informed that their obviously successful assault was bloodily repulsed by "silent" artillery fire. Administration, supply, and transport operations were rated as successful, but the manoeuvres ". . . served to disclose the fact that the art of moving transport columns by routes where they will be immune from artillery fire requires further study."<sup>114</sup>

Aldershot continued to steadily chip away at inefficiency and unrealistic training and to rectify the problems uncovered by the 1908 Maneuvers. For the 1909 Maneuvers, Sir Horace, the Red Commander, pitted his 1st and 2nd Divisions, 1st Cavalry Brigade and the Household Cavalry Brigade against the Blue leader--Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Paget, who was assigned the 3rd and 4th Divisions. French and his staff set up the problem to resemble the Novara Campaign of 1849. French intended that the first day (21 September) would be used to concentrate the 50,000 men, the second day for reconnaissance and the last day for battle. He did not consider the marching ability of the troops--who covered twenty-three to thirty-five miles instead of the norm of fifteen--or the aggressiveness of both commanders. By the end of the first day his schedule was upset and the official visitors were somewhat confused.<sup>115</sup>

Each sides' cavalry did a superior job in locating the enemy but lost their baggage trains because of poor security. Frequently, the umpires had to stop the operation, untangle the troops and start them over again. As a result, French and his staff quickly lost control of the operation. Although both sides made mistakes in the heavily wooded country, Smith-Dorrien seized the initiative, dominated the action, and as the Times put it,

. . . scored a very decisive success. If Sir John French is of the same way of thinking it will doubtless in time become common knowledge. Meanwhile about certain facts there can be no dispute. Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien was in this country, at the time of his taking up the Aldershot Command, known chiefly by reputation. He is now recognized by all who have the pleasure of serving under him as a trainer and leader of troops of the very highest order.<sup>116</sup>



Sir John was probably not of the same way of thinking, and Sir Horace's good press may have irritated French's already touchy vanity.

Smith-Dorrien, however, was pleased with his troops, though he was still dissatisfied with cooperation among his units. In his view, they needed more experience in combined operations before the next autumn maneuvers.

In the last week of August, 1910, it was announced that on the 12th and 13th of September, Sir Horace would command the 1st and 2nd Divisions against the 3rd and 4th Divisions in a rematch of the 1909 battle. But five days before the maneuvers began, Sir John French used his authority to inexplicably pull Smith-Dorrien from his rightful place as commander of the Aldershot Forces and replaced him for the duration of the maneuvers with Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Plumer.<sup>117</sup> Smith-Dorrien was posted as Chief Umpire--a no-win assignment. Poor umpiring had marred the 1909 series, and with revised but untested umpire rules out, if things went wrong, Sir Horace would get the blame. Furthermore, the Aldershot Forces were given 5,400 Territorials (25% of total Red force) to assimilate into their organization.

There were some unique aspects of the maneuvers for 1910. Over 70,000 soldiers were involved--the largest peacetime maneuvers to date. Also the dirigible, "Beta" and two airplanes were assigned to the Red army for experimental purposes. "Beta" flew over 700 miles and was operational on four of the five days. Observers were needed in the airplanes because the pilot was too busy flying to make accurate observations.

Tactically, the maneuvers were indecisive. Again the march discipline of support units was found to be wanting. One column made

up of two field artillery brigades, one heavy battery and its ammunition column, two sections of a Royal Engineer Field Company, the 3rd Mounted Brigade (Territorial), two companies of mounted infantry, and one company of a Transport and Supply column arrived at its destination seven hours late. Furthermore, its orders did not specify if the head or the tail of the column was to close at the specified time. French faulted Plumer for having his forces too widely spread out and criticized Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Douglas for making piecemeal attacks. Neither side co-ordinated their operations well.

As expected, all the umpires came in for blistering criticism. Smith-Dorrien accepted it, but resolved not to allow it to happen again. As previously mentioned, Sir Horace arranged for Colonel G.T. Forestier-Walker to speak to the Aldershot Military Society on "Umpiring" in April, 1911. In his introduction of Forestier-Walker, Smith-Dorrien said:

You must know that we lost a good deal of credit last year at Aldershot for our training, and it was greatly due to the way in which the umpire rules were carried out. I thought myself--and I prided myself--that the training here of all arms was exceedingly well done, and that we had attained a very high level of efficiency, and it was therefore very disappointing to me, in talking matters over afterward with the Inspector-General [French], and in hearing criticisms on manoeuvres generally, to be told that our training, though very good had failed on manoeuvres owing to the non-appreciation of the proper way of carrying out the umpire rules. I said, 'It is all very fine to say this, but you must remember the new umpire rules as laid down are very vague and indefinite, and I must defend all my officers at any rate for not being able to understand them because I have had great difficulty in finding out from the War Office instructions how we were intended to use these yellow flags  
 . . . . '118

Smith-Dorrien's analysis of the recent maneuvers convinced him that additional work was necessary in building inter-branch understanding. Early in 1911, he put his ideas into a memo for the command. "The unit which is best trained for war is not necessarily the one which is most highly trained as an individual unit, but the one which is best able to co-operate efficiently with other units, whether belonging to the same or any other arm."<sup>119</sup>

Throughout the rest of 1910 and into the summer of 1911, Smith-Dorrien had his forces working on mutual-support tactics. And for the first time, umpires were used during these exercises to familiarize everyone with the manner of their employment. Sir Horace's troops were ready for the 1911 Autumn Maneuvers. Unfortunately, Smith-Dorrien never had the opportunity to demonstrate the capabilities of his command because with the outbreak of the rail riots in London that fall, all maneuvers were cancelled and the soldiers were required to patrol the city and keep the peace. But Sir Horace did not need the maneuvers to prove his worth for that had already been done earlier.

Smith-Dorrien's greatest contribution in preparing the army for the First World War was not in realistic maneuvers, marksmanship, or dismounted action by the cavalry, or functional tactics based on common sense, or improving the lot of the British soldier. All of the above were important,--some were extremely important--and when taken as a whole, they amount to a considerable achievement which any general would be proud to claim. There was, however, a more important problem which attracted Smith-Dorrien's attention. He was concerned about the crippling weakness common to practically every military effort launched

from British shores--mobilization. Very few men had the capability, and even fewer possessed the inclination to tackle this problem. Monthly kit inspections and annual maneuvers, which were sufficient for years and satisfied the authorities that all was well, uncovered about five to ten percent of the wrinkles that would become discomfortingly obvious upon full mobilization. Only an officer with Smith-Dorrien's attention to detail, his nit-picking thoroughness, and his driving professionalism, who was at the same time placed in a position with sufficient authority to enforce his views, could have made any headway against the institutionalized muddle. Once in command, Sir Horace sought to gradually implement his mobilization plans. He did not try to undertake a mobilization exercise for the entire corps at Aldershot. That was a concept that tottered on the outer limits of fantasy at the War Office. Instead, he chose to concentrate on one unit at a time.

Sir Horace did not waste a moment. During the first week of his command he ordered a surprise mobilization of a field ambulance unit. His objective was to observe the procedures in assembling the men, horses, equipment, and stores and the functions and proficiency by all personnel during a combat drill. Needless to say, the mobilization order was a surprise but the results were not. "Possibly it is in the mind of the new General Officer Commanding to introduce the feature mentioned [mobilization] into some portion at least to the ensuing season's practice . . . ." <sup>120</sup> It certainly would be introduced that season and every other season for as long as Sir Horace was there.

One month later, during the first week in March, a divisional artillery unit was mobilized and put through its paces. On Friday, March 13, the same was done to the entire transport and supply

organization of the 1st Division. Captain W.S. Douglas's 1st Cable-Company joined the number of those units newly initiated into the mysteries of mobilization on April 3, 1908.<sup>121</sup>

By the summer of 1908, even the "thickest brick" saw that this was not a passing fancy with the G.O.C. Other unit commanders hurried over to speak with their colleagues, who had just finished the ordeal, to learn what corrections they needed to make before they too received the mobilization order. Suddenly, Sir Horace's staff became very popular and were courted by those who had not been under the gun for any leaks as to who might be next.

In the middle of July (1908), the 2nd Scots Guards were inspected with their full transport column. These mobilization tests usually took two to three days and the unit was literally tested ". . . down to a bootlace . . . ." <sup>122</sup> All units were brought to full strength by soldiers from other units filling the ranks instead of the reserves. Reserve horses were borrowed from the Army Service Corps. Smith-Dorrien and his staff followed and studied the unit from its receipt of the mobilization order, through an assembly, a meticulous "glorified kit inspection," a route march, and a ". . . minor field operation."<sup>123</sup>

Eleven months later, in June 1909, Smith-Dorrien called out an entire brigade on a surprise emergency mobilization. By now, everybody had learned his job, procedures were streamlined, bottlenecks were eliminated, and earlier deficiencies were corrected. Sir Horace expressed his ". . . entire satisfaction with the rapid and successful turn out by the troops for immediate service . . . ." The correspondent for the Naval and Military Review wrote that same month that

mobilization ". . . was one of the most important experiments that has ever been tried here . . . . He [Smith-Dorrien] started mobilizing units and gradually got the whole command accustomed to doing the work systematically without shouting, swearing, confusion, and the tearing about of gallopers and orderlies."<sup>124</sup>

A review of the Army Orders published in the Army List served as one indicator of the completeness and importance of Sir Horace's efforts. Mobilization Store Tables for at least ninety-two different units and functions were introduced or revised as a result of shortcomings discovered by full mobilization. Additionally, inventories and packing lists for twenty different wagons or carts were developed and tested for completeness.<sup>125</sup>

Complementing the practical experience gained in the mechanics of mobilization, Sir Horace saw to it that his officers also received some specialized tactical instruction through his staff rides. But not all his staff rides dealt with problems of attack and defence; he saw combat as a far more complex issue than that. One such staff tour of his ran from June 27 to July 1, 1910, and was intended ". . . to afford officers an opportunity of studying the problem of a Line of Communication, such as might obtain in the event of an Expeditionary Force being dispatched to take part in a Continental War."<sup>126</sup> As with all his staff tours, Smith-Dorrien recorded his thoughts on various aspects of the staff's performance: "In deciding a line of action due attention must of course be paid to what the enemy may do, but it is best to begin with what one wishes to do one's self, and then consider how it may be interfered with by the enemy."

Sir Horace reprimanded an officer for ignoring government directives, and wrote in the critique of the tour, ". . . one of the first principles of strategy is that it must be in harmony with policy . . . like it or not, it is a fact that politics always have and always will largely dominate strategy . . . ." For officers who would not make a decision until they had all the facts on the enemy he advised, ". . . the Commander, who is always waiting for more information before making up his mind how to act, may find himself compelled finally to conform to his enemy's movements . . . . If your plan is really sound, and you proceed with it, in 19 cases out of the 20 the enemy will have to conform."<sup>127</sup>

Sir Horace advocated using every possible advantage, and deception was one of them: "The spreading of false information so as to mislead the enemy as to your real plans is most important." He was also very conscious of security problems: "Remember that Operation Orders are of a Confidential nature, and therefore not more should be issued than are absolutely necessary." He likewise reminded the participants to keep all rear staff personnel informed as to the developments of the situation so they may conform to new requirements, and to avoid starting a march too early. "The importance to the men of getting a good night's rest cannot be exaggerated."<sup>128</sup> One of Smith-Dorrien's continuous themes was, "The necessity of being quite clear about your strategic objective, and never losing sight of it when it comes to tactics."<sup>129</sup>

Not all of Smith-Dorrien's tests of War Office plans and procedures were welcomed. On one occasion, Sir Horace decided to use a recently received contingency plan as the subject of a staff tour. It dealt

with the possible invasion of Britain. Naturally, ". . . certain defects were exposed which seemed to merit the attention of the authorities . . . ." After Smith-Dorrien sent his findings to the War Office, he received a very stiff, curt answer which stated that the contingency was not likely to occur and that there would be international complications if he tried this again.<sup>130</sup>

Smith-Dorrien's total refurbishing of the army's mobilization machinery was not wasted on the government. Finally the War Office approved the funds required for a mobilization of an entire division to be held in July, 1909. Unlike previous mobilization exercises this was not to be a surprise. It was designed by Smith-Dorrien; "To show as an object lesson a division at war strength both at the halt and on the move; to practise its march on one or more roads, and its eventual deployment in enclosed country and to practise the tactical handling in action of a division complete in all its sources of supply."<sup>131</sup> Since the reserves of horses and men were not to be called-up, every unit at Aldershot was stripped to field a division at war strength. On 27 July there was an inspection, a march, and an operation against a skeleton enemy. On paper the division consisted of 19,630 men, 7,504 horses, 70 guns, and 1,130 vehicles.

Since this was the first time anyone had ever seen a full British Division, it drew quite a crowd. Field-Marshal the Duke of Connaught was there to inspect the unit. Also present was the entire Aldershot Command and Staff, General Sir Ian Hamilton (Adjutant-General), Major-General Sir H.S.G. Miles (Quartermaster-General), Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Douglas, Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Paget, General Sir



Archibald Hunter, Major-General Douglas Haig, the commanders of the 3rd and 4th Division, and foreign observers from Russia, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland. Sir John French elected not to be at Aldershot for Smith-Dorrien's triumph.<sup>132</sup>

Nobody seemed to realize just how much ground a division would require,<sup>133</sup> ". . . such a paraphernalia of war was displayed as to shock even the modesty of Mr. Haldane himself. There was scarcely room in the county for the division to change front."<sup>134</sup> It took twenty-five minutes for a brigade of artillery to pass by the reviewing stand. The mobilization proved to be quite an education for all those present. It illuminated many flaws and highlighted problems, especially in the supply and transport areas. Shortages of both horses and reservists were items marked down for further study. On a more positive note, however, Charles A'court Repington, the famous military correspondent for the Times, concluded that ". . . all agreed that the experiment was worth the price and that it was admirably conducted by the Aldershot Command."<sup>135</sup> Eighteen months later the Naval and Military Record observed "The result of last season's mobilization practices have borne fruit, and have well justified the new course of procedure adopted by Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien . . . various alterations have been made as a result of the experiments and these have been embodied in memoranda for future guidance. Too much cannot be said for this innovation in military training at home, for it is an application of the semi-final test of efficiency."<sup>136</sup> The next time a British division would be at full strength coincided with mobilization for the final test of efficiency in August, 1914,--war.

In 1911, Sir Horace received a set back to his ongoing plans to upgrade the army. He was informed that because of the costs of the coronation and the Royal Military Review, there would be no major mobilization exercises and that maneuvers would be on a much smaller scale than those previously held.

Time was running out for Smith-Dorrien's tenure at Aldershot. It was rumored that he would replace Sir John French in the prestigious post as Inspector-General of the Forces. But French would not allow Sir Horace to upstage him again; another position would have to be found--one out of the country if possible. But Smith-Dorrien had other ideas; he declined the offer to Command in South Africa because he wanted to be close to any impending action in Europe. When the Southern Command was suggested, he accepted, and on February 28, 1912, he passed the colors to Lieutenant-General Sir Douglas Haig. Naval and Military Record summed up his term and very tactfully referred to French's attitude toward him:

The G.O.C. has sought no personal ambition while holding this command. . . . It is a difficult thing to please everybody but Lieutenant-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien has steered tolerably clear of the common pitfalls that await a general officer in the head command of the army. In a quiet way he has emphasized many lessons in the field which might in less careful hands have been destroyed or put back, and his innovations have been such as have appealed at once to the minds of practical soldiers, especially those in which rapid and systematic mobilization are concerned.<sup>137</sup>

But Smith-Dorrien was just doing his duty as a professional officer. For him, the four and one half years commanding the "plum of the British army" was business as usual. He wrote, "Throughout the period of my command at Aldershot, although events of local and temporary interest

were jostling one another and one's life was full as it could hold, there was not much of general interest. . . ."138

Two and one half years after Smith-Dorrien left his post at Aldershot, Great Britain was engulfed in the First World War. In retrospect, Sir Horace was probably correct in that, compared with events in August, 1914, ". . . there was not much of general interest . . ." during his tenure as G.O.C. During the intervening two and one half years, the army had absorbed those lessons Smith-Dorrien had been so insistent upon. Mobilization, England's military bane, ran perfectly--due to the well rehearsed procedures that had been developed and perfected by Smith-Dorrien. In the retreat from Mons in August, 1914, the cavalry covered itself with glory--not by the knee-to-knee charge with leveled lances and flashing sabres but by a very successful, tenacious rear guard action characterized by a rapid and devastatingly accurate rifle-fire from dismounted troopers. Besides his views on cavalry, Smith-Dorrien's emphasis on entrenchments proved correct as did his beliefs about the machine gun, artillery, and combined arms operations.

Sir Horace's confidence in the initiative and the abilities of individual soldiers and small unit leaders paid enormous but unrecognized dividends in the early months of the war. While commanders and staffs struggled to comprehend the awesome scope of the war, England's regulars died holding their positions until new far larger armies were raised and trained at home. "The Old Contemptibles" melted away in the white-hot inferno of modern combat leaving only a legend and their spirit behind.

It was not that Smith-Dorrien's considerable contributions were forgotten or taken for granted by the army during the war; rather, it

was that his ideas, as unpopular as they were in peace, were merely absorbed into and accepted by the system. Military institutions are like living organisms; often they do not change or evolve toward a more efficient system unless forced to do so for survival when faced by new situations. Britain's army found Smith-Dorrien's policies to be an expedient and a correct solution, and as a consequence, they followed them.

Despite Sir Horace's important contributions, there were no heroes in a peacetime army and by the fall of 1914, there were more important things to do than congratulate a general on his validated training programs. Nevertheless, when Smith-Dorrien walked away from his Alder-shot forge in February, 1912, he left behind an impressive new sword worthy of its lineage to King Arthur's Excalibur. And if Sir Horace's creation was clumsily handled in war, its blade was keen and bright and earned the justifiable title--rapier among scythes. Both Smith-Dorrien and the men he trained accomplished their mission, and that is all any soldier can hope to do.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE: FORGING THE BLADE

<sup>1</sup> When the office of Commander-in-Chief was abolished, the Inspector-General of the Forces was created. His duties were to "... inspect all branches of the forces (both personnel and material) and to report to the Army Council upon their condition and generally on the readiness and fitness of the Army for service. He is also to attend all large manoeuvres and reviews, and he and his staff will act as umpires. To assist him in his duties he has a staff of seven Inspectors, viz., of Cavalry, of Horse and Field Artillery, of Garrison Artillery, of Engineers, of Army Service Corps, of Medical Services, and of Equipment and Ordnance Stores. Neither he nor his staff has any executive or administrative functions. S.T. Banning, Organization, Administration and Equipment Made Easy (London, 1915), 8.

<sup>2</sup> The Naval and Military Record and Royal Dockyards Gazette, December 19, 1907, p. 786. Hereafter referred to as NMR.

<sup>3</sup> NMR, December 5, 1907, p. 778.

<sup>4</sup> John Walters, Aldershot Review, (London, 1970), 185

<sup>5</sup> Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed, 128.

<sup>6</sup> Horace Smith-Dorrien, "Notes for the Improvement of the Intelligence and Comfort of the Men," Public Records Office, London, WO 105/47; Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 356.

<sup>7</sup> NMR, May 20, 1909, p. 307.

<sup>8</sup> Cole, The Story of Aldershot, 337; Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 364.

<sup>9</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 357; William Robertson, From Private to Field-Marshal (New York, 1921), 156. By comparison, the Southern Command complained of "... wretched conditions under which men are called upon to soldier... badly lighted barrack rooms... lack of amusement, all tend to make the men dispondent." NMR, December 10, 1908, p. 811.

<sup>10</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 356. Smith-Dorrien enjoyed squash, which was about the only dismounted sport he played. His career could be tracked by the squash courts left in his wake.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 355.

<sup>12</sup> Warner, Army Life, 8.

<sup>13</sup> NMR, December 10, 1908, p. 811.

<sup>14</sup> London Times, September 11, 1908.

15 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 355-56.

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16 Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed, 129.

17 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 356. It was not until March, 1911, before the Army Council gave their blessing to Smith-Dorrien's experiment and soldiers ceased to patrol garrison towns throughout Great Britain. NMR, March 11, 1911, p. 147.

18 NMR, February 23, 1910, p. 115

19 Walters, Aldershot Review, 186.

20 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 355.

21 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 155-57. Robertson was moved from Assistant Quartermaster-General at Aldershot to head the command's General Staff in January 1908. He held that position until August 1910, when he became the Commandant of the Staff College replacing Brigadier-General Henry H. Wilson. During the First World War, Robertson served as the Quartermaster-General for the B.E.F. until January, 1915 when he became Chief of the General Staff, B.E.F. He was in that billet until December, 1915 when he was selected to be the Chief of the Imperial General Staff.

22 XYZ, A General's Letters to His Son on Obtaining His Commission (London, 1917), 6. The preface was written by Smith-Dorrien.

23 C.N. Barclay, "The British Army of the Nineteenth Century. How Good Was It?" Army Quarterly and Defence Journal CIV (October 1973), 89; G.D. Redway, "The Shortage of Army Officers," Nineteenth Century and After LXVII (June 1910), 1077.

24 Lord Roberts, "The Army As It Is and As It Was," Nineteenth Century and After LVII (January 1905), 21.

25 Earl of Erroll, "Dearth of Officers," Nineteenth Century and After LVII (May 1905), 746; Redway, "Shortage of Officers," 1083; Great Britain, Report of the Committee Appointed by the Secretary of State for War to Enquire into the Nature of Expenses Incurred by Officers of the Army and to Suggest Measures for Bringing Commissions within the reach of Men of Moderate Means (London, 1903), 7-8.

26 Barnett, Britain and Her Army, 314. Curiously, Great Britain was the only country that did not require an oath of allegiance as this fact was presupposed of its officers. XYZ, A General's Letters, 3. Considering the social backgrounds of English officers, it was no surprise that the top fifty boarding schools (public schools) provided 60% of the entrants at the Royal Military College at Sandhurst in 1890, and 68% in both 1900 and 1910. When the smaller public schools were added to this, the percentages jumped to 80%, 85%, and 91% respectively. Many of these boys' fathers were army officers; for the same three years as above, the figures were 54%, 42%, and 43%. Between 1876 and 1914, 55% of all the officers in the cavalry, infantry, Guards, and Indian Army were from Sandhurst. C.B.

Otley, "The Educational Background of British Army Officers," Sociology VII (May 1973), 197; C.B. Otley, "Social Origins of British Army Officers," Sociological Review XVII (Number 2, 1970), 222-28.

27 Bernard Law Montgomery, The Memoirs of Field-Marshal the Viscount (New York, 1958), 29.

28 Bryce Poe II, "British Army Reforms 1902-1914," Military Affairs XXX (Fall 1967), 132. A sample of the articles printed in England's premier military publication, the Journal of the Royal United Services Institute over a ten month period included: a translation of reports from the Chief of Staff of the Second Japanese Army, "Opinions with Regard to the Attack of Entrenched Positions," LI (August 1907), 1005-15; Lieutenant-Colonel I. Izmetiev (Russian), "The Importance of Secrecy In War," LI (November 1907); "Notes Upon Company and Battalion Tactics and the Employment of Artillery in Battle," LII (January 1908), 64-75; Captain B. Vincent, "Artillery in the Manchurian Campaign," LII (January 1908), 28-52; Colonel F.N. Maude, "Mobility: Its Influence on Strategy," LII (February 1908), 196-207; and "French and German Tendencies with Regard to the Preparation and Development of an Action," LII (May 1908).

29 Bond, The Victorian Army, 205.

30 Hannah, Roberts of Kandahar, 154

31 As the non-commissioned officers actually ran the unit on routine matters, some of the most incredibly incompetent officers limped along until retirement. Efficiency reports on these officers were quite entertaining: "This man's troopers would follow him anywhere, but only out of curiosity." Warner, Army Life, 8.

32 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 324.

33 NMR, February 20, 1908, p. 115.

34 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 159-60.

35 Ibid., 158.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 NMR, October 20, 1908, p. 675.

39 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 159; F.R.C. Carleton, "The Short Service System," Army Review, I (July-August 1911), 55.

40 NMR, May 14, 1908, p. 307.

41 NMR, March 18, 1909, p. 163; January 9, 1908, p. 19; March 19, 1908, p. 179; and March 26, 1908, p. 195.

- 42 Dunlop, Development of the British Army, 292. Major-General Sir Douglas Haig had Haldane's support and overrode the Staff Directorate's disapproval of Part II.
- 43 J.F.C. Fuller, The Army in My Time (London, 1935), 126.
- 44 William McElwee, The Art of War, Waterloo to Mons (Bloomington, Indiana, 1974), 231.
- 45 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 158.
- 46 NMR, February 11, 1909, p. 83.
- 47 Walton, "Odd Man Out," 36; NMR, May 20, 1909, p. 307
- 48 During a luncheon, Smith-Dorrien tried to convince a cabinet member to approve a grant of £100,000 to purchase the excellent Vickers machine gun. The gentleman laughed at Sir Horace, accused him of being frightened of the Germans, and assured him that "... if England ever went to war, the Germans would provide the most monumental examples of crass cowardice the world has ever seen." Smithers, The Man Who Disobeyed, 135.
- 49 Ibid., 146; Frederick Maurice, The Life of Lord Rawlinson of Trent (London, 1928), 91-92; A. Lynden-Bell, "Remarks by General Ian Hamilton, K.C.B., D.S.O., Commanding-in-Chief, Southern Command on the Training of Troops During 1907," JRUSI LII (January 1908), 92; Great Britain, War Office, "Infantry Training, 1911," Army Review I (July-October 1911), 86-89.
- 50 This weapon was first introduced in 1895. It was reduced from eight pounds ten and one half ounces to eight pounds two and one half ounces in 1902 when it became the SMLE, Mark I (Short Magazine Lee-Enfield). The barrel was 25.19 inches and it fired a .303 calibre round. The rifles' rate of fire was fifteen rounds per minute, but twenty to twenty-five were common. A Seventeen-inch sword bayonet was issued for the rifle. The magazine held ten cartridges which were loaded five at a time with a charger. Its sights were graduated out to 2000 yards and it remained Britain's service rifle until 1954. G. Tylden, "Principle Small Arms Carried by British Regular Infantry," Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research XLV (Winter 1967), 246-47.
- 51 Army List-May 1909, Army Order 137, 1909-Equipment Regulations-Amendments, 1669; Ibid., Army Order 144, 1909-Musketry Regulations-Amendments.
- 52 "Infantry Officer," "Army Shooting and Its Improvement," Blackwood's Magazine CLIX (March 1901), 322.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 NMR, September 10, 1908, p. 579.
- 55 Vivian, The British Army, 131; NMR, August 17, 1910, p. 515.
- 56 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 359.



57 NMR, June 25, 1908, p. 402; Ibid., July 23, 1908, p.467; Ibid., August 20, 1908, p. 531.

58 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 359. In June 1910, the 7th Hussars "... obtained a figure of merit of 110.4 in the annual musketry course,... This is a rather remarkable for a cavalry regiment." The unit had 517 men on the range: fifty-one qualified as marksmen, 230 as first class, 216 as second class, and the last ten as third class. NMR, June 29, 1910, p. 409.

59 F.C. Carter, "Our Failings in the Assault," Army Review III (July-October 1912), 94.

60 Ibid., 104. A haversack contained the soldier's fork, spoon, toothbrush, spare bootlaces, shaving brush, comb, razor and case, housewife (sewing kit), towel, soap, extra ammunition, emergency ration, and his leftover bread or biscuit ration. A greatcoat was rolled and strapped onto the pack. In the coat's pockets were a pair of socks and a worsted cap. The ammunition waistbelt carried ninety rounds in six fifteen-round pockets and the bandolier contained and additional fifty cartridges. Banning, Admistration, 31-32.

61 Anon., "The Place of Doctrine in War," Edinburg Review CCXV (January 1912), 30.

62 Anon., "The British Army and the Modern Conception of War," Edinburg Review CCXXIII (April 1911), 342.

63 C.C. Munro, "Fire and Movement," Army Review I (July-October 1911), 93.

64 NMR, July 15, 1909, p. 435.

65 Vivian, The British Army, 97.

66 Roberts to Balfour, December 7, 1904, Balfour Mss., British Library Add. Mss. 49,725, f. 105. as quoted by Edward M. Spiers, "Rearming the Edwardian Artillery," Journal for the Society of Army Historical Research LVII (Autumn 1979), 175-76. Even Roberts did not begin to comprehend the artillery requirements in terms of guns and shells demanded for operations like the Somme Offensive.

67 Vivian, The British Army, 71-78.

68 D.S.O., "A Plea for the Restoration of the Infantry Spirit," National Review XXIV (June 1908), 587.

69 Anon., "The Future of Our Cavalry," Blackwood's Magazine CLXIX (May 1901), 721; Charles Ffoulkes, "The Lance," Army Quarterly and Defence Journal XVII (October 1928), 95.

70 H.E. Braine, "The Sword and the Lance Versus the Rifle," Nineteenth Century and After LXXI (May 1912), 968.

- 71 Ian Hamilton to E. Childers, October 30, 1910, Hamilton Mss., Centre for Military Archives, King's College, University of London 7/3/15; John French, preface to General F. von Bernhardis, Cavalry in War and Peace (London, 1910), p. xi, as quoted by Edward M. Spiers, "The British Cavalry, 1902-1914," JSAHR LVII (Summer 1979), 76.
- 72 D. Haig to Henrietta Haig, March 16, 1900, Haig Mss., National Library of Scotland, vol. 6, Box 4, as quoted by Spiers, "British Cavalry," 75.
- 73 Kitchener to Roberts, May 12, 1904, Roberts Mss., National Army Museum, R/33/131. Ibid., 72
- 74 C. Stein, "Cavalry Problems," Blackwood's Magazine CLV (May 1894), 683; Anon., "Lance, Sword, and Carbine," Blackwood's Magazine CLXXIII (June 1903), 777.
- 75 Spiers, "British Cavalry," 72.
- 76 Army List-March, 1903, Army Order 39, 1903, p. 1410.
- 77 Spiers, "British Cavalry," 71. Rimington commanded a cavalry brigade in India during this period and Scobell was Inspector-General of Cavalry until 1910 when he became the G.O.C. Cape Colony District. The Earl of Dundonald (Douglas Mackinnon Baille Hamilton Cochrane) was the exception to the rule. He was the second son so he went into one of the bluest of the blue-blooded regiments--the 2nd Life Guards in 1870 as a coronet. He saw action in the Sudan and carried the dispatches announcing the death of General Gordon and the fall of Khartoum. In 1895, he became the commander of the 2nd Life Guards. He was an excellent cavalry commander in the Boer War and reorganized the Canadian Militia in 1902. Although he retired in 1907 as a lieutenant-general, he stayed in touch with military developments. His active service and attitude was a rarity in the Household Cavalry. He was a progressive officer in the first sense. In 1897, he designed a light machine gun and a light ambulance; neither were adopted by the army. He was too old for active service in World War I, but served as chairman of an Admiralty committee on smokescreens. He used plans his grandfather developed to excellent effect in 1918. Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940, 185.
- 78 Great Britain, War Office, Cavalry Training, 1907 (London, 1907), 187.
- 79 Roberts, "The Army As It Was," 21.
- 80 John Wilkinson Latham, British Military Swords from 1880 to the Present Day (New York, 1966), 50. This committee produced an experimental model in 1904. It was a straight single-edged blade thirty-five inches long and one inch wide with a full bowl guard and a pistol grip handle. King Edward approved the pattern on July 25, 1908 although he did not like its appearance. "... it was without a doubt the finest sword with which any army in the world has ever been equipped." Ibid., 51.
- 81 Ian Hamilton, The Soul and Body of an Army (New York, 1921), 120-22.

- 82 C. Ballard, Smith-Dorrien, (London, 1931), 127.
- 83 Walton, "Odd Man Out," 33; Ballard, Smith-Dorrien, 127.
- 84 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 359.
- 85 Esher, Journals, II, 278, as quoted by Walton, "Odd Man Out," 34.
- 86 NMR, May 21, 1908, p. 323; Walton, "Odd Man Out," 35; London, Illustrated London News, May 23, 1908.
- 87 Ballard, Smith-Dorrien, 128; Walton, "Odd Man Out," 36. Nor would French visit Sir Horace when Smith-Dorrien was G.O.C., Southern Command. When duty threw the two together, the atmosphere was rather chilled. Smith-Dorrien recorded one meeting with French, Lord Esher, and Repington (military correspondent for the Times), were present: "To me a by no means satisfactory discussion. The I.G. [French] struck me as biased and I certainly was not impressed by his views." Smith-Dorrien Diary, September 23, 1909, as quoted by Walton, "Odd Man Out," 35.
- 88 Walton, "Odd Man Out," 36; Ballard, Smith-Dorrien, 128. This promotion board consisted of four members of Army Council and the General Officers, Commanding-in-Chief of the Irish, Eastern, Aldershot, and Southern Commands. Inspector-General of the Forces was the board president. The board's recommendations were forwarded to the Secretary of State for War. Banning, Organization, 5.
- 89 Army List-June, 1909, Army Order 158, p. 1677.
- 90 NMR, January 4, 1911, p. 11.
- 91 De Lisle to Lord Roberts, June 7, 1910, Roberts Mss., National Army Museum, R/233, as quoted by Spiers, "British Cavalry," 79. De Lisle served under Smith-Dorrien on the Nile Campaign. In the early weeks of World War I, he commanded the 2nd Cavalry Brigade and by the end of the war, he was a lieutenant-general and commander of the XIII Corps.
- 92 F.C. Carter, "Our Failings in Outpost Duties," Army Review III (July-October 1912), 506.
- 93 NMR, September 30, 1909, p. 611.
- 94 NMR, October 29, 1908, p. 691.
- 95 An exercise was a tactical operation against a skeleton force representing the enemy. The unit commander's initiative was kept within certain parameters established by the officer in charge of the exercise. These limits were designed to illustrate a particular tactical point. A maneuver was a "free action" operation against an opposing force. The "enemy" could be a skeleton force, but more commonly, was of comparable strength. Each commander was own his own resources to obtain his mission. Great Britain, War Office, Training and Manoeuvre Regulations 1909 (London 1909), 47.

- 96 NMR, March 19, 1908, p. 179.
- 97 NMR, April 5, 1911, p. 211.
- 98 See Appendix C: Selected Lectures Presented to the Aldershot Military Society.
- 99 NMR, December 27, 1911, p. 819.
- 100 NMR, May 31, 1900, p. 339.
- 101 Rudyard Kipling, "The Courting of Dinah Shadd," Life's Handicap. Being Stories of Mine Own People (New York, 1914), 115; William G. Knox, "Yeoman Hopkins," Nineteenth Century and After LXIX (March 1911), 565.
- 102 John Brice Collier, "The Autumn Manoeuvres of 1872," JSAHR L (Winter 1972), 223.
- 103 Elliot Wood, Life and Adventure in Peace and War (London, 1924), 72.
- 104 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 162; NMR, March 7, 1910, p. 131.
- 105 NMR, June 24, 1909, p. 387.
- 106 G.K. Scott-Moncrieff, "Land for Military Training. An Appeal and a Suggestion," Blackwood's Magazine CLXXX (August 1906), 159.
- 107 "Martini," "The War in the West," Blackwood's Magazine CLXXIV (November 1903), 657.
- 108 G.T. Forester-Walker, "Umpiring," Aldershot Military Society Lecture given on Monday, April 10, 1911 and published by the society, p.2.
- 109 Ibid., 5.
- 110 Ibid., 7.
- 111 Ibid., 16, 18.
- 112 London Times, September 21, 1908.
- 113 Ibid.
- 114 Ibid. Coverage of the maneuvers were printed in the Times on September 15-18, and 21, 1908.
- 115 In addition to the Duke of Connaught, Lord Roberts, Sir Evelyn Wood, and Lord Grenfell were present. Mr. Haldane and the other members of the Army Council were also there. Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Bolivia, Brazil, Chili, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and the United States sent observers.
- 116 London Times, September 23, 1909.

117 French would repeat this again when he sacked Smith-Dorrien in May, 1915 and replaced him with Plumer.

118 Forestier-Walker, "Umpiring," 1.

119 NMR, December 27, 1911, p. 817.

120 NMR, February 6, 1908, p. 83.

121 NMR, March 5, p. 147; 19, p. 179; April 9, p. 211, 1908.

122 NMR, July 16, 1908, p. 451.

123 NMR, October 22, 1908, p. 675.

124 NMR, June 17, 1909, p. 371.

125 These vehicles were: Ambulance Wagon; Cart, Water Tank; Wagon, G. S.(General Service); Maltese Cart; S.A.A. Cart (Small Arms Ammunition); Wagon, Ammunition and Stores, R.A.; Cable Cart; Balloon Wagon, R.E.; Printing Wagon; Light Spring Wagon, R.E.; Boatwagon; Limbered Wagon, G.S.; Cart, Water Tank with filtering apparatus; S.A.A. Ammunition Wagon with limber; Forage Cart; Air-line Wagon, G.S. Wagon, R.E.; Reservior Gas Wagon; and Light Wagon. Army List-January 1910, Army Order 22, 1910-Books and Forms, p. 1853; Ibid-February 1910, Army Order 44, p.1676.

126 "Report on the Aldershot Command and Staff Tour Held from 27th June to 1st July, 1910 Under the Direction of Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, K.C.B., D.S.O., A.D.C., General, G.O.C.-in-C., Aldershot Command," 4.

127 Ibid., 23-24.

128 Ibid., 25-27.

129 "Report on the Inter-Divisional and Command Manoeuvres 1910 Under the Direction of Lieut.-General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien," Printed at the Headquarters Printing Office, Aldershot Command, 1910, 6.

130 Robertson, Private to Field-Marshal, 165-66; Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 358.

131 London Times, July 27, 1910.

132 Ibid., July 29, 1909.

133 The division supply park was not included in the exercise and the division ammunition column and the division transport and supply column did not participate in the route march and tactical operations. Ibid., September 27, 1910.

134 NMR, December 30, 1909, p. 818.

135 London Times, August 7, 1909.

136 NMR, December 15, 1910, p. 786.

137 NMR, November 8, 1911, p. 706.

138 Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 346.

## EPILOUGE

Smith-Dorrien held the Southern Command until the Great War broke out, whereupon he became a commander of a Home Defence Army. His unit existed only on paper and was part of the Home Defence Central Force commanded by General Sir Ian Hamilton.

On August 17, 1914, the II Corps commander, Lieutenant-General Sir James Grierson died from a heart attack enroute to the front. Hamilton volunteered for the job, but Sir John French, leader of the British Expeditionary Force wanted Lieutenant-General Herbert Plumer. However, Lord Kitchener, the Secretary of State for War, owed Smith-Dorrien a favor from the Curzon feud, and on August 19, offered the command to Sir Horace over French's objections.

Kitchener was aware of French's feelings toward Smith-Dorrien, but Sir Horace assured him that he could get along with French. The King asked Smith-Dorrien to keep him informed and told him to ask for Sir John's permission to allow Smith-Dorrien to send the King a special war diary. The King's "request" only further irritated French and he resented Smith-Dorrien's direct access to the King.<sup>1</sup>

Smith-Dorrien arrived in France on August 21. The fog of war at French's headquarters had reduced operational visibility to zero; the British flanks were in the air, their French allies were falling back rapidly, and the Germans were rolling steadily forward.

By the 23rd, several facts concerning the front line situation had finally filtered through the confused layers of command back to French's

headquarters. Sir John cancelled an attack when he was informed that over two German corps were approaching. As the German juggernaut collided with the overstretched British lines around Mons, panic set in at General Headquarters. Withering rifle-fire from Smith-Dorrien's II Corps managed to stop the enemy momentarily. On the 24th, Sir John ordered a general withdrawal to re-establish flank contact with the French soldiers. This retreat was well executed but extremely difficult because many units were engaged with the enemy.

Although they were near total collapse, the soldiers continued their fighting withdrawal through the 25th. When Smith-Dorrien's cavalry screen informed him early on the 26th that they could not hold off the Germans any longer, Sir Horace consulted with his subordinate commanders, evaluated the chances, and bravely took the decision to stand and fight at Le Cateau--against orders. He knew that if the exhausted soldiers tried to continue the retreat they would be destroyed. He was confident that his men could stop the Germans long enough for the rear echelons to escape which would clear the roads so that his men could then follow unhampered. His decision was a desperate gamble, but Smith-Dorrien felt that the odds were on his side--and he was right.

John Terraine, a respected military historian, wrote that Le Cateau was, ". . . one of the most splendid feats of the British Army during the whole of the war."<sup>2</sup> Smith-Dorrien was cool, steady, and unflappable in the battle, while despair was the dominant emotion at the B.E.F. Headquarters. Sir John, who prophesied a British disaster at Le Cateau, never forgave Sir Horace for embarrassing him once again. From then on, French was quick to find nonexistent faults with every-



thing that the II Corps (and later Smith-Dorrien's 2nd Army) did or failed to do through the battles of the Marne, Aisne, and Ypres.

Finally, in May 1915, during the Second Battle of Ypres, French relieved Smith-Dorrien of his command and sent Sir Horace's old friend, General Sir William Robertson to inform him, " 'orace, You're for 'ome."<sup>3</sup> French had labelled Smith-Dorrien's request to withdraw slightly to a much better defensive position as a defeatist attitude and bluntly refused to allow it. Smith-Dorrien realized that French's hostility toward him was hurting the war effort so he offered to resign--but French had already decided to sack him. Plumer was Sir Horace's replacement, and it was ironic that Plumer's first act was to put Smith-Dorrien's plan of withdrawal into effect with French's full approval.

Upon his return to England, Smith-Dorrien was given command of the First Home Defence Army. He also received the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, but the honor rang hollow.

In November 1915, he was selected for the independent command of the expedition to East Africa. Enroute, he became deathly ill and was invalided home from Capetown in February 1916 before he assumed command. It would have been an interesting campaign; Sir Horace might have been the only British officer capable of catching the legendary Lieutenant-General Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck.

After his recovery, Smith-Dorrien was on half-pay but was still too proud to accept the charity of the Bermuda Command; he wanted to be a productive part of the war. In September 1918, the position of Governor-General of Gibraltar was tendered, and he gladly accepted it for he felt that he could be useful there. Gibraltar was a happy assign-

ment, and he and his family stayed there until his retirement in 1923. Seven years later, Smith-Dorrien was returning from assisting a friend with his ailing garden when a car crashed into his vehicle and fractured his skull. He died the next day (August 12, 1930) and was buried with full military honors at St. Peter's Eaton Square. His guard of honor was, of course, from his old regiment, the Sherwood Foresters. Sir Horace was next on the Army List for a Field-Marshal's baton--a rank and honor that would have been his fifteen years earlier if French had not considered him as an enemy.

Alan Clark, in his critical account of the British generals in World War I, wrote,

Smith-Dorrien was a clever, sensitive and rational man. No other officer of equivalent seniority--with the possible exception of Ian Hamilton, was his equal intellectually, and none could rival his ability in handling large numbers of men with economy and decision.<sup>4</sup>

Sir John Fortescue, an expert on the history of the British army, noted, "Never was a British soldier less hidebound by the traditions and prejudices of the Regular Army. He saw good in every man who wore the King's uniform."<sup>5</sup> Perhaps his character was best summarized by a bandsmen who paid him the soldier's highest complement when he remarked to Lady Smith-Dorrien that her husband was, ". . . a real gentleman, and not a bit like a general."<sup>6</sup> Sir Horace's lifetime devotion and loyalty to his soldiers were not forgotten by the men he commanded. Upon his removal from the 2nd Army, he received scores of letters expressing outrage at French and sympathy and support from officers, NCO's, and privates. His diary reveals that he was deeply touched by these unexpected sentiments and that these letters helped ease the hurt of his

dismissal.

There was a strong possibility that Sir Horace would have replaced French as commander of the B.E.F. instead of Haig. But in any case, it is idle speculation on how well the swordsmith would have wielded his own creation. The evidence is that he would have at least been a more effective leader than Sir John. Although nobody really foresaw the scope of the Great War, Smith-Dorrien understood its nature and prepared the army for it.

It was unfortunate that French's animosity toward Smith-Dorrien interfered with the war effort. French probably remembered the old army adage, "An officer, that has an iota of knowledge above the common run, you must consider as your personal enemy."<sup>7</sup> Therein lies the tragedy and reason for Smith-Dorrien's ultimate downfall. He was too successful a subordinate for such a jealous and vindictive superior.

## NOTES TO THE EPILOUGE

- <sup>1</sup> Walton, "Odd Man Out," 67.
- <sup>2</sup> John Terraine, Mons, The Retreat to Victory (New York, 1960), 134.
- <sup>3</sup> Basil Collier, Brasshat, A Biography of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson (London, 1961), 216.
- <sup>4</sup> Alan Clark, The Donkeys (New York, 1962), 88.
- <sup>5</sup> John Fortescue, "Horace Smith-Dorrien," Blackwood's Magazine CCXXIX (June 1931), 847.
- <sup>6</sup> Smith-Dorrien, Memories, 324.
- <sup>7</sup> Heinl, Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations, 255, attributed to Francis Grose.

# Appendix A: Organization of the Aldershot Command 1907-12.

## 1st Cavalry Brigade (Colonel Julian Byng)

- 7th Queen's Own Hussars
- 16th The Queen's Lancers\*
- 21st (Empress of India's) Lancers

## 1st Infantry Division (Major-General James Moncrieff Grierson)

### 1st Brigade (Colonel F. Llyod)

- 2nd Battalion Grenadier Guards\*
- 2nd Battalion Scotts Guards
- 2nd Battalion South Wales Borderers
- 2nd Battalion The Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire) Regiment

### 2nd Brigade (Colonel Sir Henry H. Rawlinson)

- 2nd Battalion The King's (Liverpool Regiment)
- 2nd Battalion Prince of Wales's Volunteers (South Lancashire Regiment)\*
- 1st Battalion North Staffordshire Regiment (The Prince of Wales's)\*
- 1st Battalion Prince of Wales's Leinster Regiment (Royal Canadians)

### 3rd Brigade (Brigadier-General W.P. Campbell)

- 2nd Battalion Royal Warwickshire Regiment
- 1st Battalion Cheshire Regiment\*
- 1st Battalion Welsh Regiment
- 1st Battalion South Staffordshire Regiment

## 2nd Infantry Division (Major-General T.E. Stephenson)

4th Brigade (This unit was stationed in London as part of the London District and formed part of the command on mobilization and when so ordered on maneuvers.)

### 5th Brigade (Colonel A.H. Henniker-Major)

- 1st Battalion Princess of Wales's Own (Yorkshire) Regiment
- 1st Battalion Gordon Highlanders\*
- 2nd Battalion Royal Irish Rifles\*
- 2nd Battalion Gloucestershire Regiment

## 6th Brigade (Colonel C.J. Mackenzie)

1st Battalion the Buffs (East Kent) Regiment\*  
 2nd Battalion The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry\*  
 3rd Battalion King's Royal Rifle Corps  
 2nd Battalion Scottish Rifles

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## Change of Station:

Date	Bri- gade	Departing Unit	Arriving Unit
1908			
Feb.	2	2 Liverpool	1st Bn East Lancashire*
	5	1 Yorkshire	2nd Bn Lincolnshire
	6	3 KRRC	1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers*
Jul.	1	2 Gren Gds	3rd Bn Grenadier Guards
Oct.	Cav	21 Lancers	3rd Dragoon Guards
	2	2 S. Lancashire	2nd Bn Royal Irish Rifles*
	3	2 R. Warwickshire	1st Bn Worcestershire
	3	1 Welsh	1st Bn East Yorkshire
	3	1 S. Staffordshire	3rd Bn Rifle Brigade*
Nov.	1	3 Gren Gds	1st Bn Grenadier Guards*
	1	2 Scotts Gds	1st Bn Coldstream Guards*
1909			
Jan.	2	1 N. Staffordshire	2nd Bn Royal Dublin Fusiliers*
	2	1 Leinster	2nd Bn York and Lancaster*
Sep.	Cav	16 Lancers	19th Hussars
	1	1 Gren Gds	1st Bn Scotts Guards*
	1	1 Coldstream Gds	1st Bn Irish Guards*
	1	2 S.W. Borderers	1st Bn Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders*
	5	2 R. Irish Rifle	4th Royal Fusiliers*
	5	2 Gloucestershire	4th Bn Duke of Cambridge's Own (Middlesex)*
Nov.	3	1 Cheshire	1st Bn Queen's Own Royal West Kent*
Dec.	1	2 W. Yorkshire	1st Bn Norfolk
1910			
Jan.	6	2 Scottish Rifles	1st Bn Leicestershire*
Oct.	Cav	7 Hussars	2nd Dragoon Guards*
	1	1 Scotts Gds	2nd Bn Grenadier Guards*
	1	1 Irish Gds	2nd Bn Coldstream Guards*
	2	2 R. Irish Rifles	1st Bn Dorset*
	3	1 Worcestershire	2nd Bn Border
	3	1 E. Yorkshire	1st Bn Royal Irish Fusiliers*
	3	3 Rifle Brigade	2nd Bn Middlesex
	5	2 Lincolnshire	2nd Bn Suffolk*
	5	1 Gordon Highland	1st Bn Bedfordshire*
	6	1 E. Kent	1st Bn East Yorkshire
	6	2 York L.I.	1st Bn Hampshire*
	6	1 R. Irish Fusil	2nd Bn Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers*

1911

Oct.	Cav	3 Dragoon Gds	11th Hussars
	1	2 Gren Gds	2nd Bn Scots Guards
	1	2 Coldstream Gds	3rd Bn Coldstream Guards*
	2	1 E. Lancashire	2nd Bn Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry*
	2	2 Y & L	2nd Bn Yorkshire
	3	1 R.W. Kent	1st Bn Prince Albert's Somerset Light Infantry*
	3	1 R. Irish Fusil	2nd Bn Essex*
	5	4 Middlesex	1st Bn North Lancashire*
	6	1 E. Yorkshire	1st Bn King's Royal Rifle Corps*

Note: Those units that were part of the British Expeditionary Force are designated by an "\*".

## Appendix B: Positions of Selected Officers at Aldershot and in the Great War

Officers who served under Smith-Dorrien at Aldershot were undoubtedly influenced to some degree by his policies and practices. Naturally, many of these officers rose to positions of great responsibility during World War I. Listed below are selected officers with their positions at Aldershot (1) and in the Great War (2).

Baldock, T.S.

1. Commander, Royal Artillery, 2nd Division (December 1907-April 1910).
2. General Officer Commanding (G.O.C.) 49th (West Riding) Division, IV Corps (May 1915).

Burton, B.

1. Commander, Royal Artillery, 1st Division, (December 1907-October 1910).
2. G.O.C. Northumbrian Division (October 1914).

Byng, Julian H.G.

1. Commander, 1st Cavalry Brigade (December 1907-April 1909).
2. G.O.C. Force in Egypt (1914); G.O.C. 3rd Cavalry Division (February 1915); G.O.C. IX Corps at Suvla Bay, Gallipoli (August 1915); G.O.C. XVII Corps, France (February 1916); G.O.C. Canadian Corps (May 1916); G.O.C. 3rd Army (March 1918).

Chetwode, P.W.

1. Assistant Military Secretary to Smith-Dorrien (December 1907-June 1908).
2. Commander, 5th Cavalry Brigade, B.E.F. (August 1914).

Davies, F.J.

1. General Staff Officer, 1st Grade, 1st Infantry Division (January 1908-November 1909); Commander, 1st Brigade (November 1909-August 1910); Chief, General Staff at Aldershot Headquarters (August 1910-1912).
2. G.O.C. 8th Division, IV Corps (February 1915).

De Lisle, H. de B.

1. General Staff Officer 1st Grade, 2nd Infantry Division (March 1910-October 1911).
2. Commander, 2nd Cavalry Brigade, B.E.F. (August 1914); G.O.C. 1st Cavalry Division (February 1915); G.O.C. XII Corps (April 1918).



Findlay, N.D.

1. Commander, Royal Artillery, 1st Division (August 1910-February 1912).
2. Commander, Royal Artillery, 1st Infantry Division, B.E.F. (August 1914).

Grierson James M.

1. G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division (December 1907-August 1910).
2. G.O.C. II Corps, B.E.F. (August 1914). He died of a heart attack enroute to the front and Smith-Dorrien was his replacement.

Hammersley, F.

1. Commander, 3rd Brigade (January 1908-August 1910).
2. G.O.C. 11th Division (Northern) (October 1914).

Henderson, D.

1. General Staff Officer 1st Grade, 1st Infantry Division (December 1907-January 1908).
2. Commander, Royal Flying Corps (May 1915).

Kavanaugh, C.T.

1. Commander, 1st Cavalry Brigade (May 1909-January 1912).
2. G.O.C. 2nd Cavalry Division (February 1915); G.O.C. Cavalry Corps (March 1918).

Landon, F.W.B.

1. Assistant Director of Supplies and Transport (February 1908-October 1908).
2. Major-General, Director of Transports and Movements, Department of the Quartermaster-General to the Forces (July 1914).

Law, R.T.H.

1. Assistant Director of Ordnance Stores (May 1909-February 1912).
2. Inspector of Army Ordnance Services, Department of the Quartermaster-General to the Forces (July 1914).

Lomax, S.H.

1. G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division (August 1910-1912).
2. G.O.C. 1st Infantry Division (August 1914).

Mackenzie, C.J.

1. Commander, 6th Brigade (December 1907-October 1910).
2. G.O.C. Highland Division, Scottish Command (July 1914); G.O.C. 9th (Scottish) Division, Aldershot (October 1914); G.O.C. 61st (South Midland) Division, XVII Corps (March 1918).

Macready, C.F.N.

1. Commander, 2nd Brigade (August 1909-June 1910).
2. Director of Personal Services, Adjutant-General to the Forces (June 1910-August 1914); Adjutant-General (October 1914); Adjutant-General, B.E.F. (February 1915).

Maxse, F.I.

1. Commander, 1st Brigade (August 1910-February 1912).
2. G.O.C. 1st Brigade (Guards), B.E.F. (August 1914); G.O.C. XVIII Corps (March 1918).

Morland, T.L.N.

1. Commander, 2nd Brigade (June 1910-February 1912).
2. G.O.C. 5th Division (February 1915).

Rawlinson, H.S.

1. Commander, 2nd Brigade (December 1907-August 1909).
2. G.O.C. IV Corps (February 1915); G.O.C. 5th Army (April 1918).  
He and Smith-Dorrien served together in Egypt in 1898 and he commanded the only regular division in the Southern Command when Smith-Dorrien was the G.O.C.

Robertson, William R.

1. Assistant Quartermaster-General, Aldershot (December 1907-February 1908); Chief, General Staff, Aldershot (February 1908-August 1910).
2. Commandant, Staff College (August 1910-1912); Director of Military Training, Imperial General Staff (July 1914); Quartermaster-General, B.E.F. (October 1914); Chief, General Staff, B.E.F. (February 1915); Chief, Imperial General Staff (1916).

Sandbach, A.E.

1. Commander, Royal Engineers, 1st Infantry Division (July 1908-November 1908).
2. Commander, Royal Engineers, II Corps (Smith-Dorrien's) B.E.F. (1914). He and Smith-Dorrien fought together at Omdurman in 1898.

Scott-Moncrief, G.K.

1. Chief Engineer, Aldershot (August 1910-October 1911).
2. Director of Fortifications and Works, Department of the Master-General of the Ordnance (July 1914).

Wing, F.D.V.

1. Staff Officer for Royal Horse and Royal Field Artillery, Aldershot (December 1907-October 1910).
2. Commander, Royal Artillery, 1st Army (February 1915); G.O.C. 12th (Eastern) Division (September 1915).

Appendix C: Selected Lectures Presented to the Aldershot Military Society 1908-1912

This organization was composed of officers who sought to promote greater professionalism within the officer corps. Most of the lectures were presented in the winter during the "individual training " phase. Normally, the subject matter was quite broad in scope, however a great deal of it was oriented toward current problems and future expectations. Listed below are fifteen lectures selected to demonstrate the nature of these presentations.

November 12, 1908. Captain J.W. O'Dowda, "A Summary of the Campaigns Which Led Up to the Wilderness Campaign."

December, 1908. Mr. Arthur Drosy, Vice President of the Japan Society, "Raw Material of the Japanese Army."

December, 1908. Major C.E. Budworth, Chief Instructor, Royal Artillery School of Gunnery, "Tactical Employment of Artillery as Evolved on the Practise Ground and From the Experiences of Modern War."

January 27, 1909. Charles A'Court Repington, "The Future of Army Organization."

January 28, 1909. Colonel A.E. Sandbach, "The Use of Field Telegraphs in War."

February 23, 1909. Major-General Sir W.G. Knox, "The Problem of Our Army Horse and His Rider and Driver."

November 16, 1909. T. Miller Maguire, "The Peninsular War, 1808-1814, and the Russo-Japanese War, 1904-1905, Compared from the Strategic Point of View."

February 22, 1910. Lord Montague of Beaulieu, "Aerial Machines and War."

December 5, 1910. Brigadier-General Henry H. Wilson, Director of Military Operations, War Office, "Initiative and the Power of Manoeuvre."

January 6, 1911. Major-General F.J. Alymer, "French Views on the Tactical Employment of Field Artillery."

January, 1911. Major C.E. Budworth, "Artillery in Co-operation with Infantry."

January 17, 1911. Brigadier-General F.C Heath, "Royal Engineers in Co-operation with Other Arms."

February 21, 1911. Colonel H. de Lisle, "Mounted Troops in Co-operation with Other Arms."

April 10, 1911. Colonel G.T. Forestier-Walker, "Umpiring."

November 26, 1912. Lieutenant-Colonel F.F. Hall, "Co-operation Between Infantry and Artillery and the Best Means of Attaining It."

## Appendix D: Chronology of Smith-Dorrien's Career

May 26, 1858. Born in Haresfoot, Berkhamstead.

1872. Educated at Harrow.

December, 1875. Passed entrance exam for the Royal Military College at Sandhurst.

January 1876-December 1876. Cadet at Sandhurst.

January 4, 1877. Joined 95th Regiment of Foot in Dublin and Cork, Ireland as a lieutenant.

1878-1879. Fought in the Zulu War in South Africa.

1880-August 1882. Service with the 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters (old 95th Foot) in Ireland, England, and Gibraltar.

August 21, 1882-February 1883. Service with his regiment in Egypt. He saw action around Alexandria and was promoted to captain on August 22, 1882.

February 1883-January 1884. On sick leave in England after injuring knee in India enroute to his unit's cantonment.

January 1884-February 1886. Service in Egypt. While returning to India, Smith-Dorrien accepted a position in the Egyptian army under Sir Evelyn Wood. He saw combat near Suakin and along the Nile River.

February 1886-June 1886. On leave in England studying for the entrance exam to the Staff College at Camberly.

June 1886-January 1887. Back in Egypt awaiting the start of the Staff College.

January 1887- December 1888. Staff College.

January 1889-April 1892. In India with the 2nd Battalion Sherwood Foresters.

April 1892-April 1893. Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General of the Oudh District, Bengal, India. Promoted to major on May 11, 1892.

April 1893-December 1893. On leave in India.

December 1893-October 1894. Returned to his position as D.A.A.G., Oudh.

October 1894-April 1895. Assistant Adjutant-General, Umballa, India.

April 1895-August 1895. Deputy Assistant Adjutant and Quartermaster-General to a reserve brigade in the Chitral Campaign on the North-west Frontier.

August 1895-April 1896. Returned to previous job as A.A.G., Umballa.

April 1896-June 1896. Service with Sherwood Foresters in India.

June 1896-October 1896. On leave in England.

October 1896-April 1898. On active service in the Tirah Campaign in Afghanistan.

April 1898-December 1898. On active service in Egypt: fought in the battle of Omdurman. Promoted to brevet lieutenant-colonel on May 20, 1898.

January 1899-December 1899. Commanded 1st Battalion Sherwood Foresters on Malta.

December 1899-April 1901. Fought in Boer War. Commanded the 19th Brigade and later the 21st Division. Promoted to major-general on February 11, 1900 (age 42).

May 1901-November 1901. On leave in England.

November 1901-April 1903. Adjutant-General of the Indian Army. On September 3, 1902, Smith-Dorrien married Miss Olive Crofton Sneider while on a short official leave to England.

April 1903-December 1907. G.O.C. 4th Division, Quetta, India. Promoted to lieutenant-general in December 1907.

December 1907-February 1912. G.O.C.-in-C., Aldershot Command.

February 1912-August 1914. G.O.C.-in-C., Southern Command. Promoted to general on August 10, 1912.

1914- August, 18. Smith-Dorrien appointed to command II Corps, B.E.F.

August 23-24. Battle of Mons.

August 26. Battle of Le Cateau.

September 9. Battle of the Marne.

September 13-October 3. Battle of the Aisne.

October 12-November 15. Battle of Ypres.

December 25. Appointed to command 2nd Army.

1915- April 22. German gas attack.

May 7. Relieved of command by Sir John French and sent home to England.

June 22. Appointed to command the 1st Home Defence Army.

November 22. Appointed to command the East African Expedition.

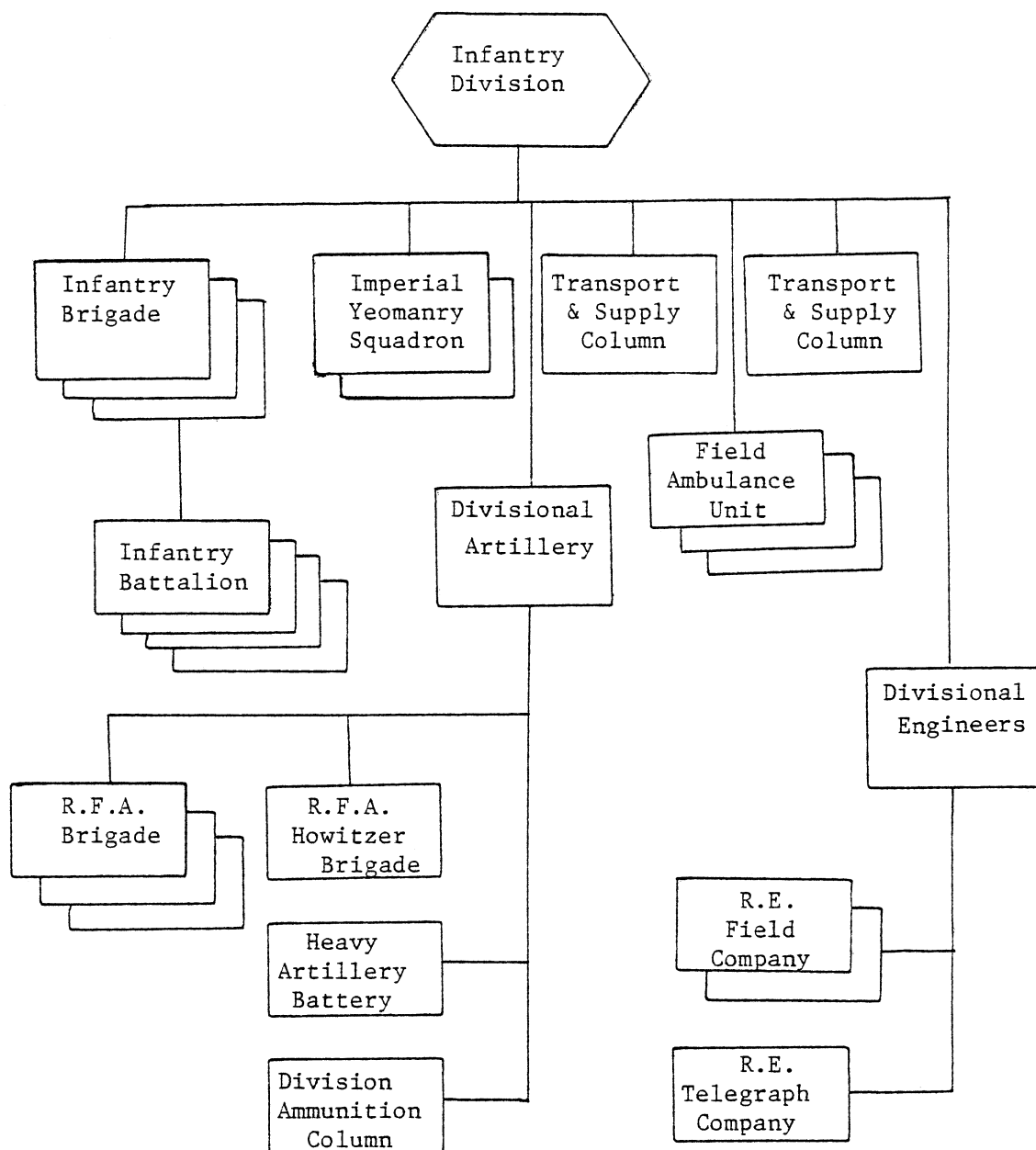
1916- February 13. Invalided home from Capetown with severe pneumonia.

1918-1923. Governor-General of Gibraltar.

1923-1930. Retired.

August 11, 1930. Fatally injured in an automobile accident and died the next day at age 72.

## Appendix E: Organizational Diagram of an Infantry Division

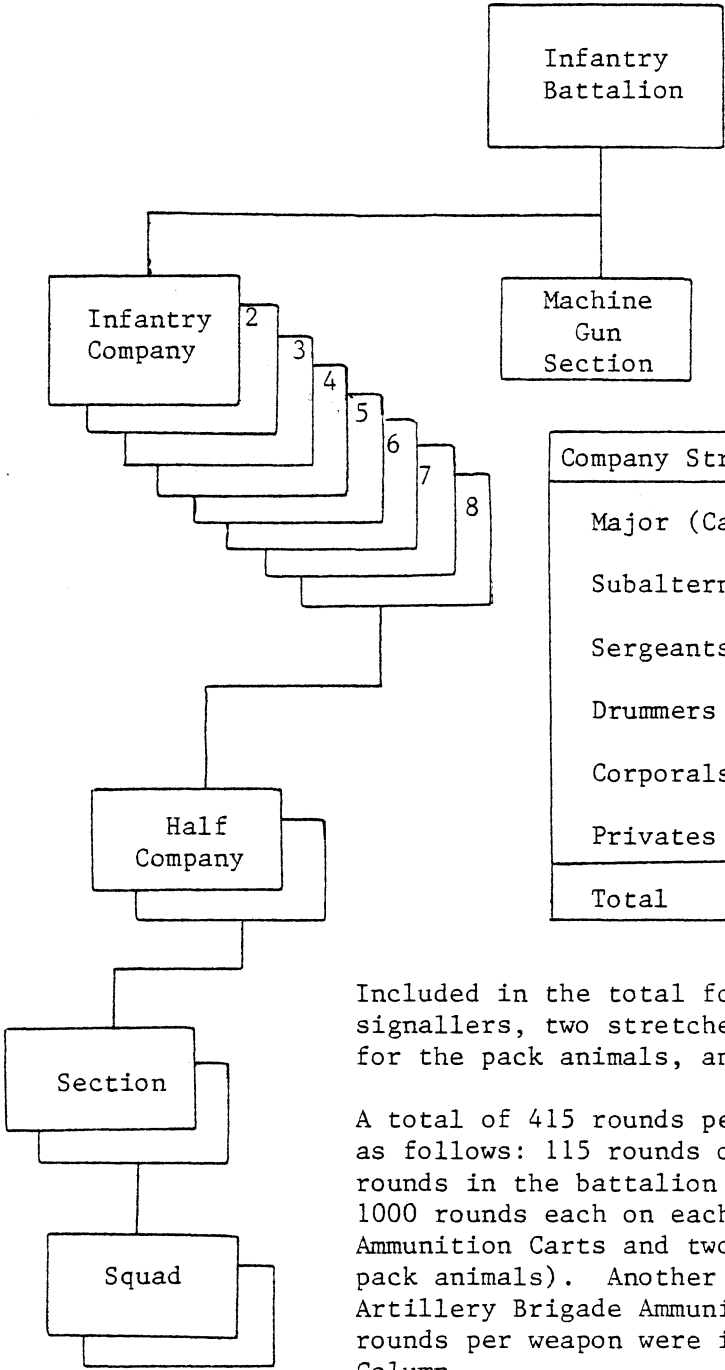


597 Officers  
18,991 Other Ranks  
7,438 Horses  
1,274 Vehicles



Appendix F: Organizational Table for an Infantry Division (1909-1912)

	Officers	Other Ranks	Total	Horses	Guns	Mach. Guns	Carts	Wagons	Total Vehicles
Division Headquarters	16	78	94	75	--	--	2	3	5
Three Infantry Brigades	363	12030	12393	927	--	24	132	66	198
Two Imperial Yeomanry Squadrons	12	318	330	350	--	--	--	8	8
Headquarters, Divisional Artillery	4	21	25	26	--	--	--	1	1
Three R.F.A. Brigades (18 pdr.)	75	2805	2880	2877	54	--	36	297	603
One R.F.A. Howitzer Brigade	18	528	546	497	12	--	4	44	48
One Heavy Battery (60 pdr.)	6	242	248	214	4	--	1	23	24
Divisional Ammunition Column	20	866	886	1165	--	--	3	169	172
Headquarters Royal Engineers	4	11	15	10	--	--	2	--	2
Two R.E. Field Companies	12	426	438	154	--	--	10	16	26
One Div. Telegraph Company	2	40	42	27	--	--	--	4	4
Divisional Trans. & Supply Column	23	446	469	377	--	--	9	67	76
Divisional Trans. & Supply Park	12	457	469	445	--	--	9	32	41
Three Field Ambulance Units	30	723	753	294	--	--	18	48	66
TOTAL	597	18991	19588	7438	70	24	226	778	1274



Company Strength at:	War	Home
Major (Captain)	1	1
Subalterns	2	2
Sergeants	5	4
Drummers	2	2
Corporals	5	5
Privates	105	85
Total	120	99

Included in the total for the company are six signallers, two stretcher bearers, two drivers for the pack animals, and three batmen.

A total of 415 rounds per rifle were distributed as follows: 115 rounds on each soldier and 100 rounds in the battalion reserve (sixteen boxes of 1000 rounds each on each of the five Small Arms Ammunition Carts and two boxes on each of the eight pack animals). Another 100 rounds were in the Field Artillery Brigade Ammunition Column and another 100 rounds per weapon were in the Divisional Ammunition Column.

# Composition of an Infantry Battalion and an Infantry Brigade Headquarters

Infantry Battalion Headquarters		Infantry Brigade Headquarters	
Lieutenant-Colonel	1	Brigadier-General	1
Major	1	Aide de Camp (ADC)	1
Adjutant (Captain)	1	Brigade-Major	1
Quartermaster	1	Staff Captain	1
Transport Officer	1(a)	Signal Officer	1
Signal Officer	1(a)	Signallers	4
Sergeant-Major	1	Clerk	1
Sergeants	8	Military Mounted	
Drivers	10	Police	5
Medical Officer Order-lies	2	Army Post Office Corps	4
Batmen	6	Cook	1
Total		Batmen	10
		Army Service Corps Drivers	5
Attached:		Total: five officers, three sergeants, twenty-seven rank and file, twenty-five horses, one General Service (G.S.) Wagon with 120 shovels, 80 pickaxes, and eight crowbars, and one G.S. Wagon for baggage and supplies.	
Medical Officer	1		
Armorer	1		
Army Service Corps Drivers(ASC)	10		
Royal Army Medical Corps	5		
Grand Total			
	48		

In tool carts or on pack animals were 222 shovels, 148 picks, eighteen felling axes, nine hand axes, 40 bill hooks, one hand saw, one cross cut saw, twenty reaping hooks, eight crow bars, and twenty sand bags.

Note "a": The signal officer, transport officer, and machine gun section leader were subalterns provided by the companies. In war, therefore, three companies were short one of their two subalterns.

Infantry Battalion					Infantry Brigade ( 4 battalions)	
	HQ	Mach Gun	Battalion Total(8 Companies)		War	Home
			Home	War		
Officers	5	--	29	29	121	121
Sergeants	10	1	41	51	204	164
Corporals	--	--	40	41	164	160
Drummers	--	--	16	16	64	64
Rank & File	33	14	680	887	3578	2720
Total personnel	48	15	801	1024	4131	3229
Horses: Riding	9	1	10	10	56	56
Draught	39	4	43	43	181	181
Pack	2	--	18	18	72	72
Total animals	50	5	71	71	309	309
S.A.A. carts	5	1	6	6	24	24
Medical carts	1	--	1	1	4	4
Forage carts	2	--	2	2	8	8
Water carts	2	--	2	2	8	8
G.S. Wagons	4	1	5	5	22	22
Machine guns	--	2	2	2	8	8
Total vehicles	14	2	16	16	66	66

## Composition of Artillery Batteries

	Royal Horse Artillery		Royal Field Artillery		Heavy Battery 60 Pounder
	a.	b.	a.	b.	b.
Officers	5	5	5	5	5
Sergeants	9	9	8/9	9	8
Trumpeters	2	2	2	2	2
Corporals	5/6	7	4/6	7	7
Bombadiers	5/6	11	4/6	11	6
Artificers	6/7	9	6	9	8
Rank & File	112/140	158	103/129	135	128
Attached ASC drivers	--	7	--	5	5
Total	144/175	208	132/163	203	171
Horses	94/135	234	60/90	180	118
Vehicles incl. guns with limbers	21	21	21	21	14

"a." signifies Home Strength

"b." signifies War Strength

"-/-" signifies lower/higher establishment

A battery's six guns were divided into three sections of two guns each. Each gun made up a sub-section. Royal Horse Artillery used a "13 pounder" quick-firing gun and the Royal Field Artillery were issued guns that fired an eighteen pound projectile. A howitzer battery was identical in organization to the Royal Field Artillery battery except that it had twelve less rank and file. There were only four guns instead of six in a heavy battery.

## Location of Ammunition

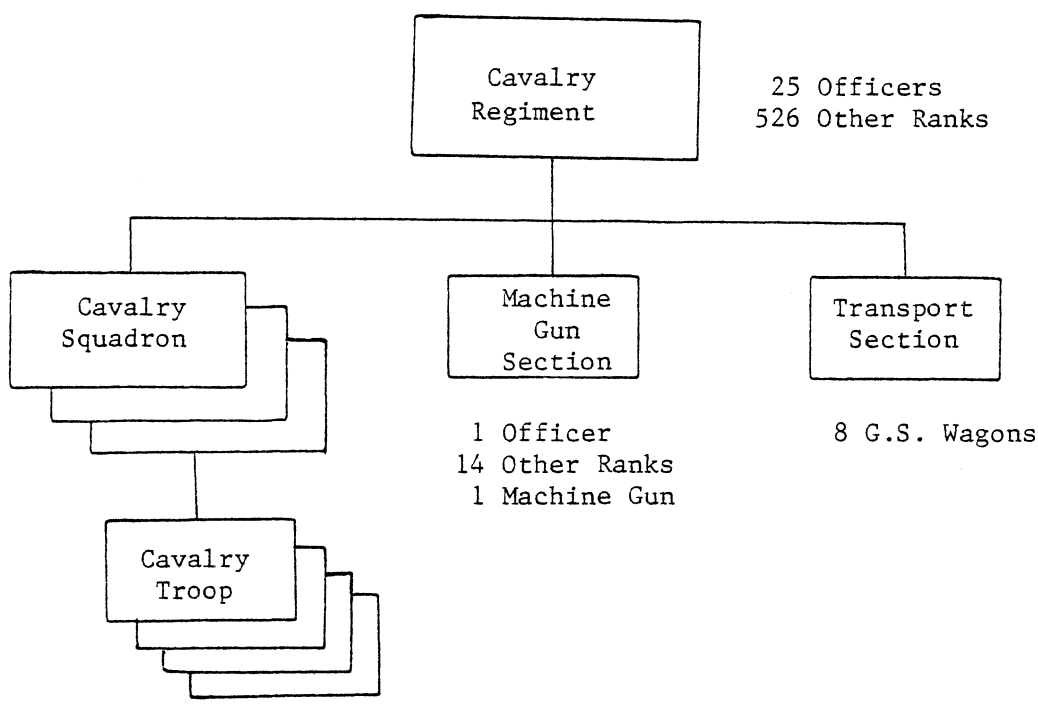
	RHA	RFA
Rounds per gun with the battery	176	176
Rounds per gun in the Brigade Ammo Column	220	202
Rounds per gun in the Divisional Ammo Column	144	120
Total rounds per gun	540	498

## Composition of Artillery Brigades (War Strength)

	Royal Field Artillery Brigade				Royal Horse Artillery Brigade			
	HQ	Three Btry	Ammo Clmn	Tot- al	HQ	Two Btry	Ammo Clmn	Tot- al
Officers	5	15	5	25	5	10	4	19
Sergeants	1	27	10	38	1	18	10	29
Corporals	2	21	9	32	--	14	6	20
Bombardiers	2	33	9	44	3	22	7	31
Trumpeters	1	6	2	9	1	4	2	7
Artificers	1	27	14	42	1	18	14	33
Gunners & Drivers	12	465	267	744	24	316	177	517
Total personnel	35	609	316	960	35	416	231	682
Guns w/limbers	--	18	--	18	--	12	--	12
Ammo Wagons w/ limbers	--	36	18	54	--	24	12	36
S.A.A Wagons w/ limbers	--	--	9	9	--	--	6	6
G.S. Wagons, ammo	--	--	21	21	--	--	12	12
S.A.A. Carts	--	--	7	7	--	--	8	8
Water/Medical carts	--	3/-	1/-	4/-	-/1	2/-	1/-	3/1
G.S. Wagons, baggage	2	6	2	10	2	4	5	11
Total vehicles incl. guns	2	63	58	123	2	42	44	88
Horses	30	540	389	959	31	468	290	789

## Cavalry Regiment at War Strength

	Headquarters & Transport Section	3 Squadrons each has:	Machine Gun Section	Total
Officers	6	6	1	25
Sergeants	7	10	1	38
Artificers	4	8	--	28
Trumpeters	--	2	--	6
Rank & File	29	134	23	454
Total personnel	46	160	25	551
Horses: Riding	23	155	21	509
Draught	28	10	8	66
Pack	1	2	--	7
Total animals	52	167	29	582
Carts	2	--	--	2
G.S. Wagons	6	--	--	6
S.A.A. Wagon & limber	--	1	--	3
G.S. Wagon: tools & equipment	--	1	2	5
Total vehicles	8	2	2	16



Every regiment should have trained men in the following skills: one officer, one sergeant, and eight regimental scouts (First Class) and sixteen squadron scouts (Second Class); four dispatch riders per squadron; no less than twelve pioneers per squadron; all officers and three-fourths of the sergeants capable of judging distance; one officer, one NCO, and eight men per squadron trained in signalling.

Each regiment carried the following tools: eighteen shovels, twelve pickaxes, thirteen felling axes, nine hand axes, four hand saws, three cross-cut saws, thirty-six reaping hooks, three crow bars, 150 sandbags, and 153 pounds of guncotton in six inch by three inch by one and one-eighth inch blocks.

Ammunition Location	Rounds/Rifle	Machine Gun
With Weapon	100	3,500
In Regimental Reserve	100	16,000
In Brigade Ammunition Column	100	10,000
In Divisional Ammunition Column	100	10,000
Total	400	39,500



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